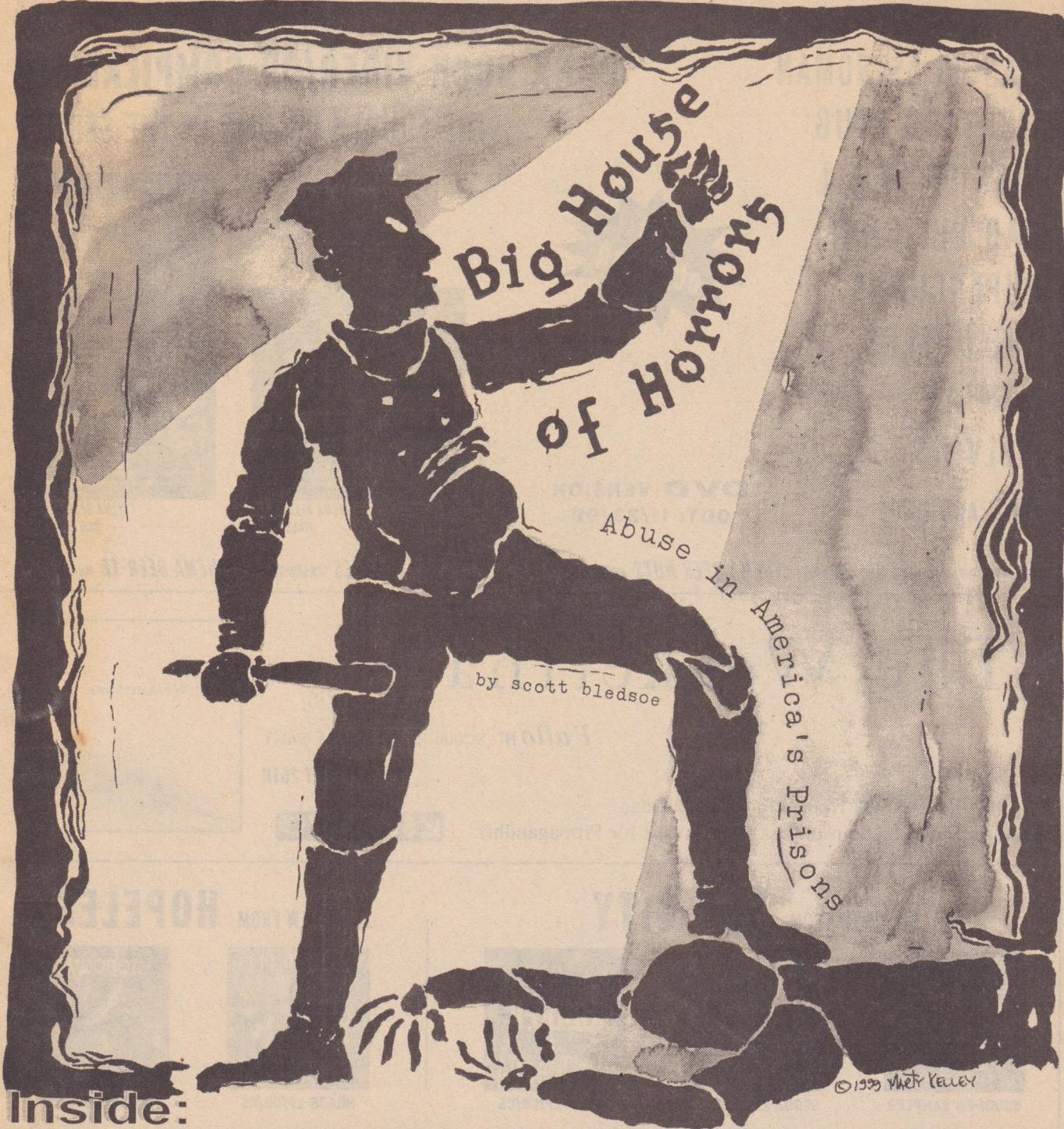


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A Moral Balancing Act

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TJ
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& Racism on the rise

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 SICK OF IT ALL
 BAD RELIGION
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 THE QUEERS
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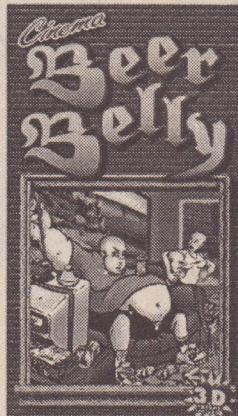


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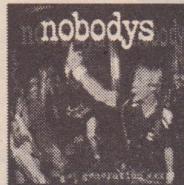
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things within

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art by marty kelley

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"Big House" of Horrors

Prisoner Abuse in America's Jails

by Scott Bledsoe

The debate over the handling of the prisoners in the system is becoming the center of several federal investigations around the country. But breaking the "code of silence" within these same systems poses the greatest obstacle in preventing further abuse behind bars. One thing is for sure, change needs to come soon. • PAGE 22

"For the average American freedom of speech is simply the freedom to repeat what everyone else is saying and no more."

QUOTES:

-- Gore Vidal

"When you say that you agree to a thing in principle you mean that you have not the slightest intention of carrying it out in practice."

-- Otto von Bismarck

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TJ Walker.com - Politics, News and a Fresh Perspective by TJ Walker: This installment tackles four topics: US-Cuba relations need to improve for national security; The stupidity behind the Miss America Pageant; Bush's hypocrisy; and Racism is on the rise as blacks find getting a home loan statistically-more difficult than whites. • PAGE 10

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Fun fact of the Issue: A bowl of lime Jell-O, when hooked to an EEG machine, exhibited movement which is virtually identical to the brain waves of a healthy adult man or woman.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From The Editor

I AM SO TIRED OF THE PRESS, and other politicians, playing games with politicians' lives and destroying what little good is left in politics. Don't get me wrong, they are in the public eye and therefore will be subject to scrutiny.

But it's the basis for this scrutiny that has me so frustrated and angered.

It doesn't matter who they are, what position they hold, or really what they've done. What matters to the press, to the other politicians and to so much of America is what team they play for – the Republicans or Democrats.

Sadly, these teams often play for the same people – whoever will stuff their pockets with more cash.

I don't care if George Bush Jr. did coke or if Bill Clinton enjoys younger women while married. Frankly, it's no one's business and definitely says little about their foreign policy or their stance on protecting minorities from racism.

What it does show is that our politics, American politics, is a joke. People care more about what the politicians do wrong than what they do right. The press is more interested in reporting on extramarital affairs than on issues that need attention. Or if they do report on worthwhile issues, they're buried on page A-39 while politicians with hookers grace the front page.

Sure, the press will say that Americans want

to know. I say it's the responsibility of the press to report what news really matters. American press coverage of politics is like watching Jerry Springer. Tell us about the money they've accepted from big business so corporations can continue polluting. Don't tell me about their dabbles in illicit drugs in 1974. Tell me about their wining and dining by mega-clothing companies so sweat shops in third-world countries can stay open.

Clinton did this. Bush did that. Gingrich did this. Gore did that. For every Democratic jab at the Republicans on some pseudo moral issue, the Republicans punch right back.

Do you really care? Are Americans so caught up in the bullshit political game that they cheer for a team? It sure seems so.

Wake up! These guys are on the same team, with slightly different issues, but the same evil desires of keeping the money coming and keeping legitimate (3rd party or independent) candidates as far from office as possible.

Demand real information on candidates. Don't judge them on their past drug use or their choice in women. Judge them on their stance on issues, on their interest in kick backs and cash handouts. Take a hard look at non-traditional candidates from other parties. Don't write them off until you give them a chance.

It's not an election year, that's true. But now is as good a time as any to rethink how America treats politics. Let's hold politicians to higher political standards, not higher moral standards. Let politics be handled by politicians and let morals be handled within personal relationships.

by Craig Mazer

Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will do the best to decipher them. However, we appreciate your effort to avoid us having to do extra work. Thanks!

IMPACT press:

You know, Don Pflaster is right ("Overpriced Musings - Pain and the Human Race," Issue #21). People born and raised in the US have no idea what war-like violence is. But millions of Americans know about violence as an on going social pathology. I mean how many kids grow up surrounded by guns, drug dealers, domestic violence and police paranoia? The answer merits not only reading but going to big cities like NY, Chicago, Philadelphia, or little cities like Ft Lauderdale or Gary Indiana, and on and on and on....and then there's Littleton and the other little towns where white middle class kids arm themselves against an enemy.

I don't want to get into why Littleton or those other small heartland, white, middle-America killing rampages. It's difficult to understand why. Let alone, explain the multiple causes that push people to do things like that. I'm just glad it wasn't some immigrant Latino that did it because oh boy...then it would be a whole other issue.

Don is right — if three soldiers are captured then the yellow ribbons — but the death of 2 million Vietnamese, civilians and soldiers, killed by more American-made bombs and bullets than everything used in WWII — than there is a loss of quality and balance between one life and the other. Even 58,000 dead American soldiers don't seem to make people talk of peace

I truly believe that many US born and raised citizens have no real sense of the lives of other human beings outside this country. But then I've also met a whole bunch and read about many more that work on a daily basis to push this war torn reality towards change.

Yeah, the media does provide enormous changes in how people sit back and think about war. When it happens out there, to

those who don't look like me or speak like me or, well, I mean they are different. And they do live in those countries or cities anyway, it seems just another picture and it can get so boring we end up going to video games and get a 'real' shot at some good killing...cool dude.

But pain, fear, and lives changed forever because of war are and will always be harder to understand than all the blood and guts in 'Saving Private Ryan,' or some terrible calamity. I think it's dangerous to believe that war makes people appreciate peace. It might deter a generation or two but eventually the real or perceived reasons to hate and act on it will over power the desire to live in peace.

It's hard to understand how media change our perception of reality. Hard for anybody, and I mean anybody. Even a well intentioned humanist who can write a touching 60's style article of how all we need is love and hopefully things will change.

You might want to believe that making human killing machines is insane, but it's just for profit, rationale beyond all insanity. It's stock price. It's market economy. It's our way of life. It's modern and civilized. Those same games Don kind of enjoys are now used to simulate war games and boost profit all over the war, excuse me, world. I'm sure the guys over at GE or Boeing have nothing personal against Colombians, or Serbs, or the Iroquois. It's business and it makes the whole darn system turn, turn, turn. It's politics and economy wrapped up in a way that most of us consume. How many Demo-

crats and Republicans tore their shirts open about the Clinton and Monica soap but can't reach out and questions themselves about other horrible things that happen every day?

Why should we? It's not our problem if the CIA and Pinochet (sic), or the FBI and the Black Panthers. You know human peace is not some utopia. It's here already. It's something a lot of people are struggling for and have been. It's never going to be perfect. It just has to be an ongoing struggle, not some wish for some uncertain and nice future.

Thanks,
Marcos Restrepo

IMPACT press:

Hi! Am always pleased and surprised when IT comes out..... have a few other 'must read' mailings but yours is right up there near the top of the list!

Regards, Jim Johnston

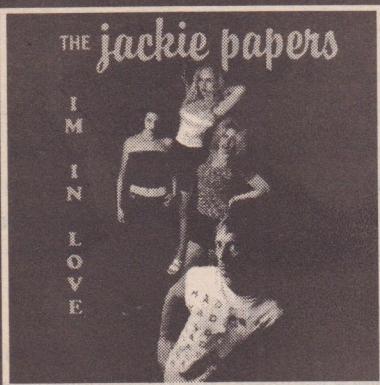
IMPACT press:

Finally someone (Sean Helton, "Your World" Issue #20) is able to put in print some of the bleeding heart stories. And the low down instead of the fantasies that our media puts out.

Jim



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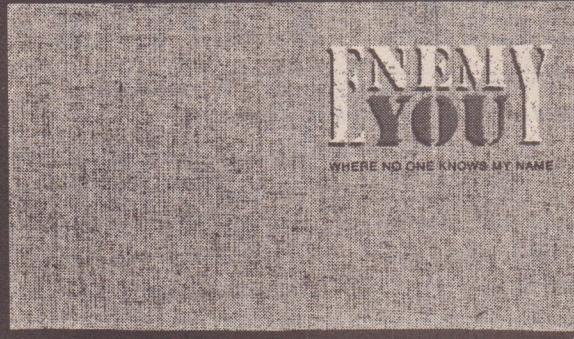
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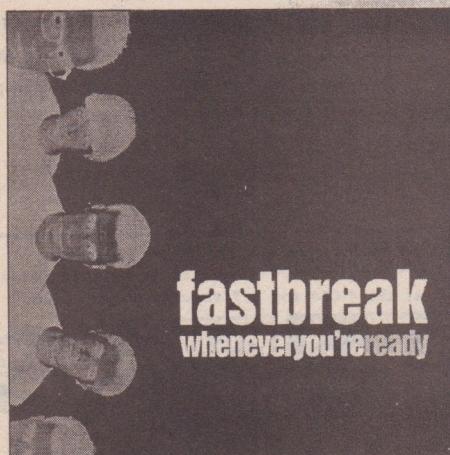
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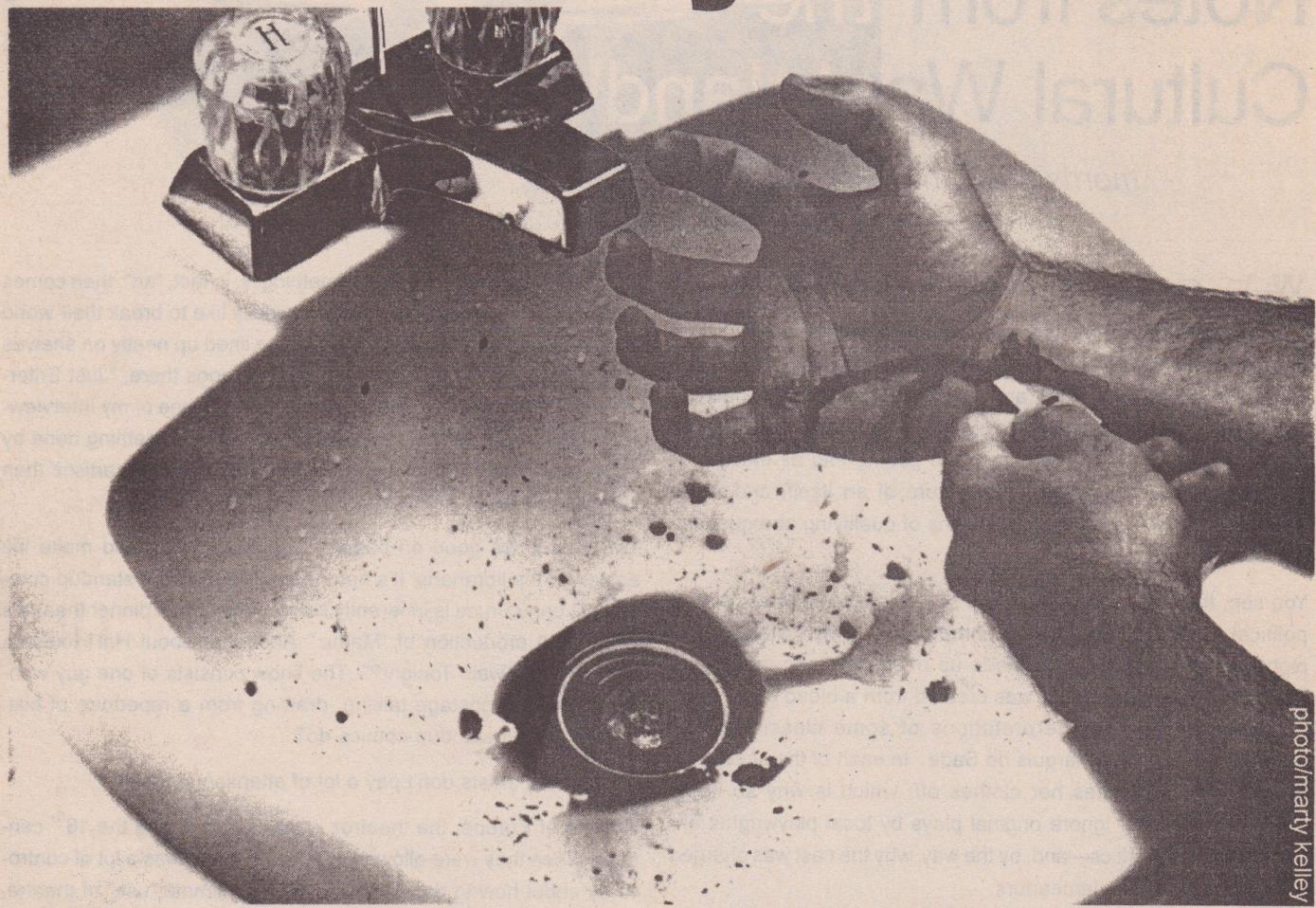
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Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

by morris sullivan
morris sullivan.



What—i s—art?

That's a question I've been dealing with a lot, lately. I should back up a little, and explain why. I wrote and directed a play. You'd think that a play is inherently "art", and that its good-art-ness or bad-art-ness would be a subjective matter for the critics. However, because of the nature of the project, I'm getting into all these lofty dialogues about the fundamental nature of art itself, and about whether there is some objective means of qualifying and quantifying its legitimacy.

You see, the very existence of this particular play has social and political ramifications. "Les Femmes Fatale" was staged at a nightclub, and the cast was made up of women who make their livings as exotic dancers. It was created from a blend of my original ideas and my re-interpretations of some classic text by Shakespeare and the Marquis de Sade. In each of the scenes, at least one person takes her clothes off, which is why so many people who usually ignore original plays by local playwrights are suddenly theatre critics—and, by the way, why the cast was charged with a couple of misdemeanors.

Anyway, that's another story, and I'm concerned here about these big philosophical questions.

...Questions like, "what makes something "fine" art, and what's the difference between art and "just entertainment?"

It seems like every person you ask about these things has a different answer. Here's mine: If the person who created it says he or she is an artist, and they call it art, it probably is.

Simply put, art is a means of communication. Unlike this essay, however, art tries to communicate in ways that aren't as linear and direct. With an artistic work, be it literary, visual, or performance, the artist may communicate something that can't just be spelled out in words, or with an impact beyond that of plain ol' exposition. For example, I could write an entire column about the Disneyfication of Orlando; no matter how artfully crafted, it's still just exposition—it ain't art, and it would probably put you to sleep. On the other hand, I can put three women in onstage, nude except for Mickey Mouse ears, and the satire—which is a form of artistic expression—would have a far greater impact with the same ideas.

In case you were wondering, I did just that.

Once you've determined that something is, in fact, "art", then comes the problem of its "quality." Humans really like to break their world up into discrete components that can be lined up neatly on shelves and labeled. "Fine Art" goes here; "Pop" goes there; "Just Entertainment" goes over on this shelf. So, posited one of my interviewers, plays are somehow inherently "finer" than something done by an improv troupe, which is somehow inherently more artistic than standup comedy.

The idea looks good on paper, I suppose, and would make life easier for the librarians. It's hard to imagine that the standup comedy of Lenny Bruce is inherently less worthy than a dinner theatre's umpteenth production of "Mame." And what about Hal Holbrook doing "Mark Twain Tonight?" The show consists of one guy wandering around onstage talking, drawing from a repertoire of bits. Isn't that what standup comics do?

Fortunately, artists don't pay a lot of attention to labels.

In parts of Europe, the theatres were closed during the 16th century. When they were allowed to re-open, there was a lot of controversy about how to decide what was a legitimate "use" of theatre, and what was an "abuse" of the form. One of the determining factors, said some, was money.

Somehow, money always manages to worm its way into the picture, doesn't it?

The idea was this: if theatre is done for financial gain, then it's not as good as if it's done for educational or other "pure" purposes. Professional actors, then, were abhorred, but amateurs were okay. Shakespeare's theatre was professional, by the way. So much, then for that argument, huh?

This idea, however, stays with us even today. You may even have bought into the idea yourself. Did you ever decide that a band you liked had lost some artistic respectability once they became popular?

Today, most people, the media included, think professional actors (and other artists) are inherently "better" than amateurs. At the same time, artists are expected to keep their motives pure by avoiding monetary reward.

This puts the artist between a rock and a hard place, doesn't it?

No wonder so many
of us starve.

Hiding Lies in the Bush

As of this writing, GOP presidential runner, George Bush, Jr., has not said yes or no to a certain question about his past as an "irresponsible" youth. That question is whether Bush, Jr sniffed cocaine or not.

Bush has said in the past 25 years he has not taken illegal drugs. Does this mean he has in the past 26 and not the past 25? His parents, Ma and Pa Bush, both have said that their son was a wild one but knew he wasn't taking any drugs. Pa Bush has said the drug question about his son's past is irrelevant.

Oh, is that so, Mr. Bush? During Lewinskigate, your son gladly opened his big mouth about his past. Your son opened it real wide when he said that he never cheated on his wife like the President.

He can bring that part about his past up but Americans can't ask him was he snortin' blow. With pinheaded thinking like that, Mr. Bush, no wonder Clinton whupped yo' ass in '92.

Your son says he's a changed man. He was an "irresponsible" person that changed his ways. He quit drinking at age 40.

Well, that's good for him. I respect that. Still, I believe Junior was snortin' some white lines. You and your wife may not agree but I surely do believe he was.

My speculations on this matter are very unorthodox. The way I arrive at my conclusions on Bush, Jr may never win me a case in court. Still, I shall proceed with it.

Through life experience, I have learned that when an accused person is innocent of any wrong doing, they would definitely say they didn't do it.

Guilty folks always give half-assed answers. Answers like, "I haven't taken any illegal drugs in the past 25 years."

Two incidents have lead me to this thinking. They both take me back to my pre-teen years at St. John's Village Apartments.

One incident involved a black kid named Ray. Ray was ten years old and for two straight days, Ray always had a wad of money. Kids of all races followed Ray to the store.

Knowing that Ray didn't have a job, I asked where did he get the money.

He didn't answer.

Then, I asked was he stealing from his mother.

"Leave me alone, Pat," he answered.

Later that day, my younger brother told me Ray was gettin' a whuppin' for stealing money from his mother.

Another incident involved a white kid named Mike. Mike and I were the same age.

One of the big things among the kids was building forts out in the nearby woods. This particular fort was built in some woods behind a store K-mart store.

Under no circumstances, did I want to steal wood from a nearby construction site for our fort.

Well, one day, Mike brings some fresh 2 by 4s to the fort.

I asked where did he get it.

Mike said, "I ain't sayin'"

Later on, he confessed to stealing it from the no-no construction site.

Those two incidents taught me that when someone gives a half-assed answer to some wrong doing, more than likely they did it.

An innocent person would more than likely say, "100 percent not guilty."

Therefore, seeing the answers Junior is giving lately, this leads me to believe that him and cocaine was partying like it was 1999.

It doesn't just stop with his half-assed answers. Not only did his campaign folks quietly buy up anti-Bush, Jr websites, Junior also hired a private investigator to investigate his own past.

Hey, Junior! Yes, you were dancing on top of a table butt-nekkid. Yes, you did it.

There are various reasons why Junior can't admit to snortin' disco dust.

One reason is that Mr. Compassionate Conservative Governor slashed drug treatment programs for prison inmates. He also toughened prison sentencing on non-violent drug offenders. Then, to put more frosting on the hypocrisy cake, he passed laws to send "irresponsible" 16 year olds to adult prisons.

If Bush says he snorted, his male bovine excrement would get even more funkier. We should forgive him for his drug use but he isn't too forgiving when it comes to other's "irresponsibility".

I noticed something as I researched this matter. The eighties

(DRUGS, continues on page 41)

mind power



by patrick scott barnes



TJWalker.com

Original News and Perspective on Politics, Media and Culture

Miss America Waffles

Ever the hip and cutting edge institution, the Miss America Pageant announced a few days ago that women who were divorced or had had abortions were people too, by golly. Yesterday, they said "maybe not."

I know I should get worked up over this, but I just can't. A pageant like this is America's version of a clitorectomy, only less painful—unless you have to watch.

What, exactly, is a Miss America Pageant? It's a TV show where there is some kind of talent, which is never as good as the worst acts on Star Search. There are supposed to be pretty women to ogle, but as a flesh show it pales in comparison to Bay Watch or even that Saturday morning fashion show on CNN.

And the Pageant's sex appeal? Please, that is as painful a concept as a pornotape starring Liddy and Bob Dole—Viagra Free!

I don't want the Miss America Pageant to modernize, liberalize, or become more progressive. The pageant is not an 8-track tape, it is foot binding.

What sort of people are attracted to beauty pageants? The parents of Jon-Benet Ramsey, "The Donald" Trump, Mike Tyson and other such grotesqueries masquerading as human beings.

I don't want a feminized Miss America Pageant anymore than I want an Affirmative Action plan for the Klan or a "Jewish section" at the Farrakhan Rally.

Will someone please put a stake through the Miss America Pageant? I have a solution on how to occupy the time of everyone currently involved with the pageant.

Donald Trump: Go back to the "modeling agency" you supposedly own and have more casting calls.

Mike Tyson: Go back to prison where you can rape and be raped by people your own size.

The Ramseys: Buy an island, clone yourselves, have sex.

The contestants who want to make it in show business: Go straight to Hollywood and start hitting the casting couches earlier than you are now.

To the contestants who are in it for the "scholarships": Instead of spending four years learning how to put Vaseline on your teeth to improve your smile and practicing how to walk in high heels and a bathing suit, try studying from real books for a change.

To the 50-year old plus male crowd that make up the TV audience of the Miss America Pageant: Get cable. Better yet, if you are so intent on looking at pretty young women showing lots of flesh, get your lazy couch potato self to the nearest strip joint.

Racial Discrimination Growing?

Every few years, either some government agency, liberal special interest group or major TV news magazine does a study where they send out people of identical financial qualifications, but different races to get bank home loans. Inevitably, marginal white folk get the loans and their minority clones are pointed the way of the nearest YMCA.

More inevitably, these stories fade instantly; they get no bounce from the New York Post to the Wall Street Journal to Rush Limbaugh to Mainstreet, USA. Now, a new survey is out from the Urban Institute and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Identically matched but racially varied testers were sent out to banks across the country. In city after city, the black and Hispanic applicants were given little time, money or benefit of the doubt. Whites were given 30-year mortgages.

The "race card" may be played too frequently in America, but racial mortgage disparities are not the same thing as Al Sharpton crying racism when he doesn't get elected the U. S. Senate. This is racism that is quantifiable; the hard numbers don't lie:

Blacks were rejected 217% as often as whites last year when trying to get home loans.

This is up from a 184% rejection rate for blacks over whites in 1995. According to the Census, 67% of whites own their own home, only 45% of blacks and Hispanics.

How do conservatives and the opponents of Affirmative Action and Fair Housing Regulation account for such huge numerical differences in the reject rates and home ownership? I don't like those who toss around the term 'racist' promiscuously, but I'm at a loss as to how the conservative mind internalizes and processes these data. Can it be that conservatives really believe most black and brown people simply prefer to smoke crack and live on the street?

An honest person—and I believe many conservatives to be honest—simply cannot ignore these numbers or these blind test surveys as meaningless. But these scientifically designed experiments that prove racial discrimination are routinely jettisoned in all national debates on race or affirmative action. Instead, we get anecdotes about black ladies with five kids who drive their Cadillacs to the A&P for Malt Liquor, or "feelings" on how affirmative action must harm the psyche's of those who benefit.

Imagine this: The Christian Coalition conducts a study showing that, all things being equal, white people who wear crosses and profess to be born again Christians were 30% LESS likely to receive home mortgage loans. Can anyone doubt that Pat Robertson would quickly bulldoze a bill through congress that would 1. De-

(RACISM, continued on page 46)

TJWalker.com

Original News and Perspective on Politics, Media and Culture



Classy Draft-Dodging

Poor George W. He can't shake this National Guard thing. Now the Washington Post reports that Ben Barnes, the speaker of the Texas legislature in the 1960s, personally asked the head of the Texas Air National Guard to find a spot for young George.

Of course, Bush could put this matter to rest now by being honest and saying, "Bless Ben Barnes if he did pull strings to get me into the Guard. The last thing I wanted to do was serve on active duty in Vietnam. I was scrambling around for any possible way of dodging the draft, short of fleeing to Canada. I wasn't crazy. None of my friends from Yale or Andover were going to die in some rice paddy. I sure wasn't going to be the first."

But of course, Bush won't make the above statement, which is patently honest, just as he won't admit to having a ball smoking weed and snorting cocaine when he was younger.

A certain amount of phoniness is expected from politicians, even demanded by the voters. But surely there has to be some hypocrisy line drawn. Where is it?

It's one thing to simply attempt to avoid embarrassment. If a candidate for public office says, "it's a good thing to go to church regularly," and yet that candidate never goes to church, this is hardly an unforgivable political sin. The candidate is merely reaffirming the basic values of many constituents.

But if that same non-church attending candidate says, "vote for me because I have a far superior church-attending record than my opponent who only goes to church once a month," well then you have hypocrisy of a more venal degree. This is why voters are forgiving of Bush's, shall we say slippery, responses to the Drug Question. Voters understand it is human to try to avoid embarrassment and they are giving Bush credit for not running a demagogic campaign accusing all Democrats of being drug peddlers.

Regarding National Guard Service, Bush's conceit is that he was a part of his father's noble generation, proudly marching off to war to save the world. In reality, Bush was firmly ensconced in the 60's Clinton era, where every smart, ambitious, well-educated and connected young man with the exception of Al Gore, did whatever it took to stay out of the war.

For Bush, charm and character are everything. Unlike every Republican nominee for president in the last 500 years, Bush has only served in office for a little over four years. He is not identified with any major political achievements or policy innovations. He has not added a single New Idea to the American political debate. Bush's number one appeal is likability and the absence of malice found in other leading Republican candidates.

But can Bush remain likeable if his draft hypocrisy continues to grow?

Fidel in 2040?

40 years ago—before this aging pundit was even born—many American liberals and progressives shared a great hope for Fidel Castro.

Could he create a better, more just society than U.S. capitalism?

Today there is a clear answer: NO!

The remaining interesting question is: How can Cuba get beyond Castro and create decent lives for its people?

Of course, Castro has to go, but we can't just send Austin Powers to Havana with an exploding cigar. For 40 years, the anti-Communist hard-liners have said, "let's isolate Cuba, cut them off from trade with the U.S. and Castro will fall within a matter of months."

Hello? It's not working. We've tried plan A for forty years and it's not doing the job. Can't we please move to plan B?

Richard Nuccio, who served as President Clinton's special adviser for Cuban policy, says it's time to resume normal diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. This is something everyone from Nixon on the Right to everyone else in the center and left have been saying for years. Everyone, that is, except for politicians who are fearful of the Cuban exile community in Miami, plus Sen. Jesse Helms.

But now Nuccio has come up with a new "incentive" for opening up to Cuba. Forget "human rights" or helping the people of Cuba have a better standard of living. Forget even helping Pepsi find new markets to sell their sugar water. Nuccio believes that Castro has vowed not to become the Gorbachev of Cuba—even if that means blowing up the world, or at least the hemisphere, to make a point.

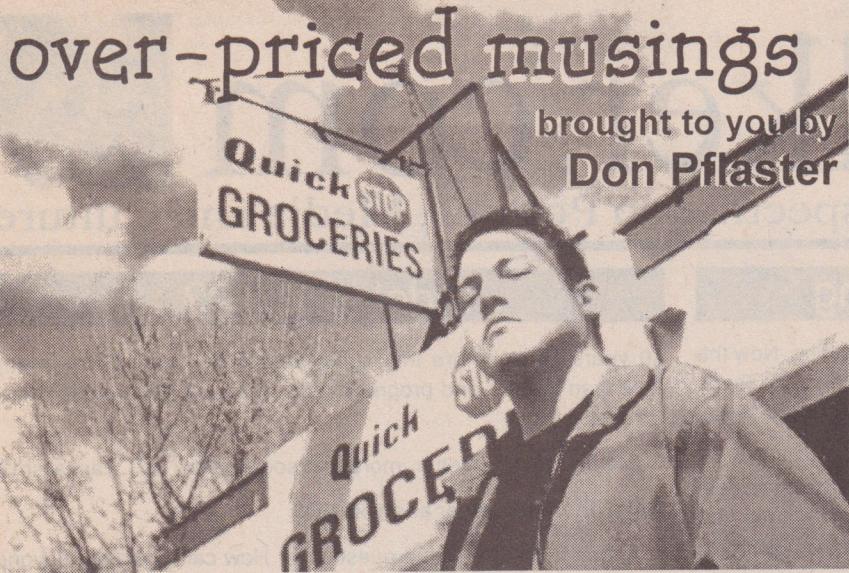
If Castro is ever told he has less than a year to live, why not blow up the U.S. as a grand final gesture of your supremacy?

The new reason to normalize relations with Cuba: National Security.

I think I'm going to like this argument, because if you disagree with me, you are obviously a communist sympathizer who is out to destroy the United States of America.

TJ Walker is the Producer of TJWalker.Com, a news and information service that provides daily radio, television, and text news and perspective. A syndicated columnist and news analyst, Walker frequently appears on the Fox News Channel, MSNBC, Court TV and talk radio programs around the country.

Formerly, Walker worked for Congress and as the Director of Communications for the Florida Department of Banking and Finance. He was graduated magna cum laude from Duke University. Walker was raised in North Carolina and resides in New York City.



○○○ Neat Ideas

Technology is really, really neat. I love to gaze upon thousands of photographs of nearby celestial objects magnified hundreds of thousands of times, and using our scientific findings to discover more about our origins. I love looking at the shape of viruses as captured by scanning electron microscopes, which give us invaluable insight into the afflictions that make our otherwise peachy-keen lives miserable. I love to watch from afar as countless scientists poke and prod into the ever-dark chasms of the undiscovered, bringing otherwise obscure, hidden clues into the light and making the mystery of us a little less frightening.

With every scientific discovery, however, dark agendas, which aren't always apparent even to the perpetrator, tend to mold and shape new discoveries to fit their purposes. The science of ballistics, for instance, has greatly shaped many of the games we enjoy (baseball, golf, football,) but has also spawned the catapult, the turrets of tanks, and the paths of intercontinental missiles. The science of physiology has allowed us to treat diseases and extend our lives, but has also led to the development of mustard gas and neutron bombs. The science of flight has made human beings into vaporous superbeings, screaming across the skies 120 times faster than we were ever able to move on two feet, but has also created a new deadly rain of death from the air *a la* bombers.

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) is among the most fascinating of discoveries, a solid reminder that life is far more complex than we will ever hope to fully understand, and that everything we are is coded in trillions of chemical switches. It is a truly compelling fact and one worth studying extensively – a far cry from the unenlightened times where people believed that the body was composed only of four key fluids: blood, saliva, mucous, and bile.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you mad," Aldous Huxley once said. The human race has plodded on with its trials

and great wars for thousands of years, visions and dreams of the few noble persons and many profiteers slowly propelling us upward and forward just fast enough to escape the downward pull of our scapegraces.

We are at a crossroads with our understanding of DNA, which is still, thankfully, in its infancy. This particular discovery scares the living bejesus out of me, partly because of our track record of using technology against ourselves, but mostly because there don't seem to be a great number of others whose bejesuses have been scared out of *them*. Perhaps the technologies are emerging too slowly, too quietly, and too insidiously to be noticed, or maybe the majority of people are too busy bitching about their cul-de-sac jobs or trying to get laid to care.

Maybe I'm a cynical prick, but the consumer product goods industry managed to slip the goddamned barcode underneath everyone's nose pretty effortlessly. It seems our culture is more concerned with being safe and saving time than actually bothering to stop to watch our humanity slip away in increments, replaced by numbers and codes. There's a more frightening prospect to which I've subscribed for a few years: that our overly ambitious businessmen and coercive politicians, the holders of power, are locked in an inescapable pattern of making decisions off the cuff to make life seemingly more efficient and safe. There isn't a damned thing we can do for ourselves when manipulative power grabbers and pocket-lined capitalists are doing the work that should be done by philosophers.

DNA recognition technology is a coming reality. There are already vast criminal DNA databases in operation by the federal government. Popular Science just ran a cover story about a new gadget that will help police to identify DNA out in the field without bringing samples back to a lab. Also according to Popular Science, and much to my shock, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, when asked specifically about it, said he would support the collection of DNA from all Big Apple newborns.

It's understandable, I suppose... after all, what do law-abiding citizens stand to lose if they have nothing to hide, right?

That argument infuriates me to no end. Nobody has that sort of blind, complete and total adherence to the law. I'm willing to bet that there isn't a single person in this country that agrees with every law in existence. Everybody would break a law under the right circumstances; there are no innocent victims. I don't want to be living in a police state where there is no adventure, no danger, just a cowering populace watching fucking sports, afraid to even leave the house for fear of a DNA sensor clocking you at one mile over the speed limit.

I will admit that DNA testing has been useful in cases of rape, and

many a rape victim who has found justice is highly in favor of collecting DNA from criminals. What is that old saying? The definition of a conservative is a liberal who's been mugged? Something like that applies here.

But come on, kids. Isn't it just downright creepy that someday you may be judged, tracked, identified with pinpoint accuracy based on your DNA signature? It sends shivers down my spine to see technology gone berserk, and new ways of doing things that we just didn't really ask for in the first place. Why can't this tide be reversed with a healthy dose of liberty? Why must we live in perpetual fear of the future?

Fear spawns fear, and more fear, but the only thing we really have to fear, contrary to what FDR might have said, is ourselves. In the words of Willy Wonka, "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams." We are the ones who make things happen. Our collective finger is on the button, and our collective fingers are on the triggers. But our fingers are also on the strings of guitars, on the implements of farmers, on the tools of constructive exploits, and interlaced with the fingers of our brethren.

We have the choice, as we always have, and we've chosen to shit on things, so now the future is an unpaved path through murky meadowlands. Perhaps the Age of Aquarius will save us all, but the smart money is on human beings leaving DNA for the scientists to study, and leaving some of the mystery of the human race well enough alone for the rest of us.

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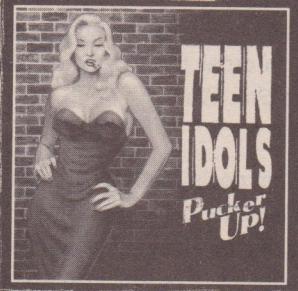
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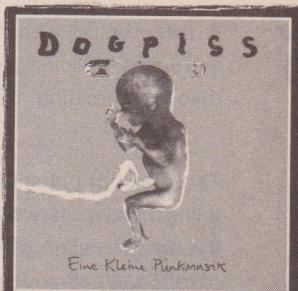
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Reagan and the Deficit

Repeatedly Democrats blame Ronald Reagan for America's huge deficit and that he is the reason we can't control our budget. The Republicans disagree with this assessment and the vast majority of American's wonder how much truth is in either view. By outlining a broad view of what occurred one can make a logical assessment of the facts, determine who is telling the truth, look at the results and decide if Reagan's decisions were worthwhile.

1. Ronald Reagan the candidate and the president had two main goals. He wanted to rebuild the military and to reduce taxes and the budget.
2. Reagan faced a democratically controlled congress that thought differently and whose goals were different.
3. Reagan's first goal was the military.
4. To achieve his aims with the military Reagan was forced to deal with a Congress bent on maintaining and expanding the welfare state.
5. A compromise was necessary and Reagan agreed to increased deficit spending in order to fund increased defense spending, including Star Wars.
The result of obtaining half his goals was the strengthening of the military, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the fragmentation of Russia, an increase in the number of free and self-governed countries, a reduction in world hostilities, and for the first time in forty years, Americans went to bed without the constant subconscious thought that nuclear missiles might hit during the night.
6. Obviously many additional forces affected past budgets but these are the main factors and outcomes. Deficit spending and the budget increased under Reagan but part of the increase was the Congress and part was his administration. To argue against his part in the increases is to say it was better with the USSR bent on global expansion and living in a world where any crisis could result in total nuclear war. Reality leads to only two questions. What did we

Guilty or Not?

by
William
B.
Kaliher

get from Reagan's part in increasing the budget and what did we get from the congressional Democrats in increasing the budget?

From Reagan we raise our children in a safer world and sleep better at night. From the democrats we increased and expanded every social welfare program and have nothing to show for those tax dollars and borrowed money. Future generations should have less resentment paying for past debt that left them safer, than they will paying for educational experiments that failed and for social welfare that increased illegitimacy, child abuse, crime, fraud and robbed people of their self respect.

Those are the options and results. Anyone wanting to question past decisions and budgets should argue from that truthful vantage point if they want to criticize past spending and budget decisions.

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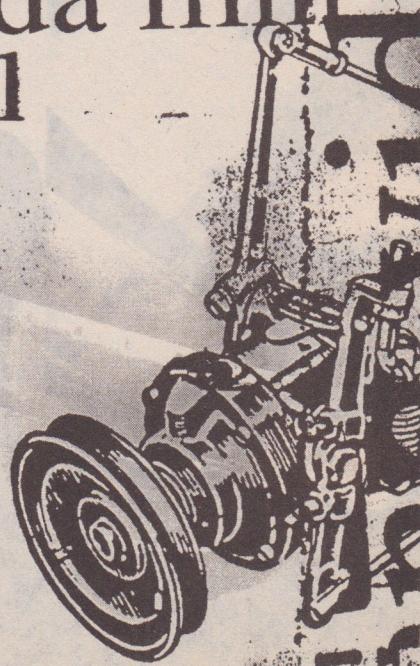
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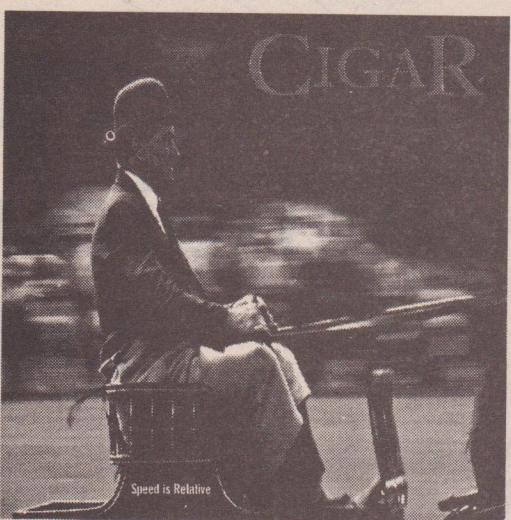
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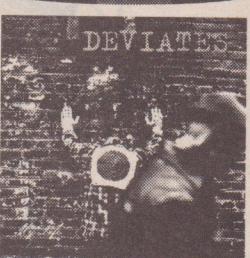
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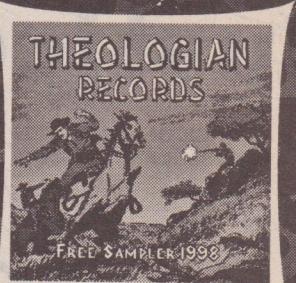


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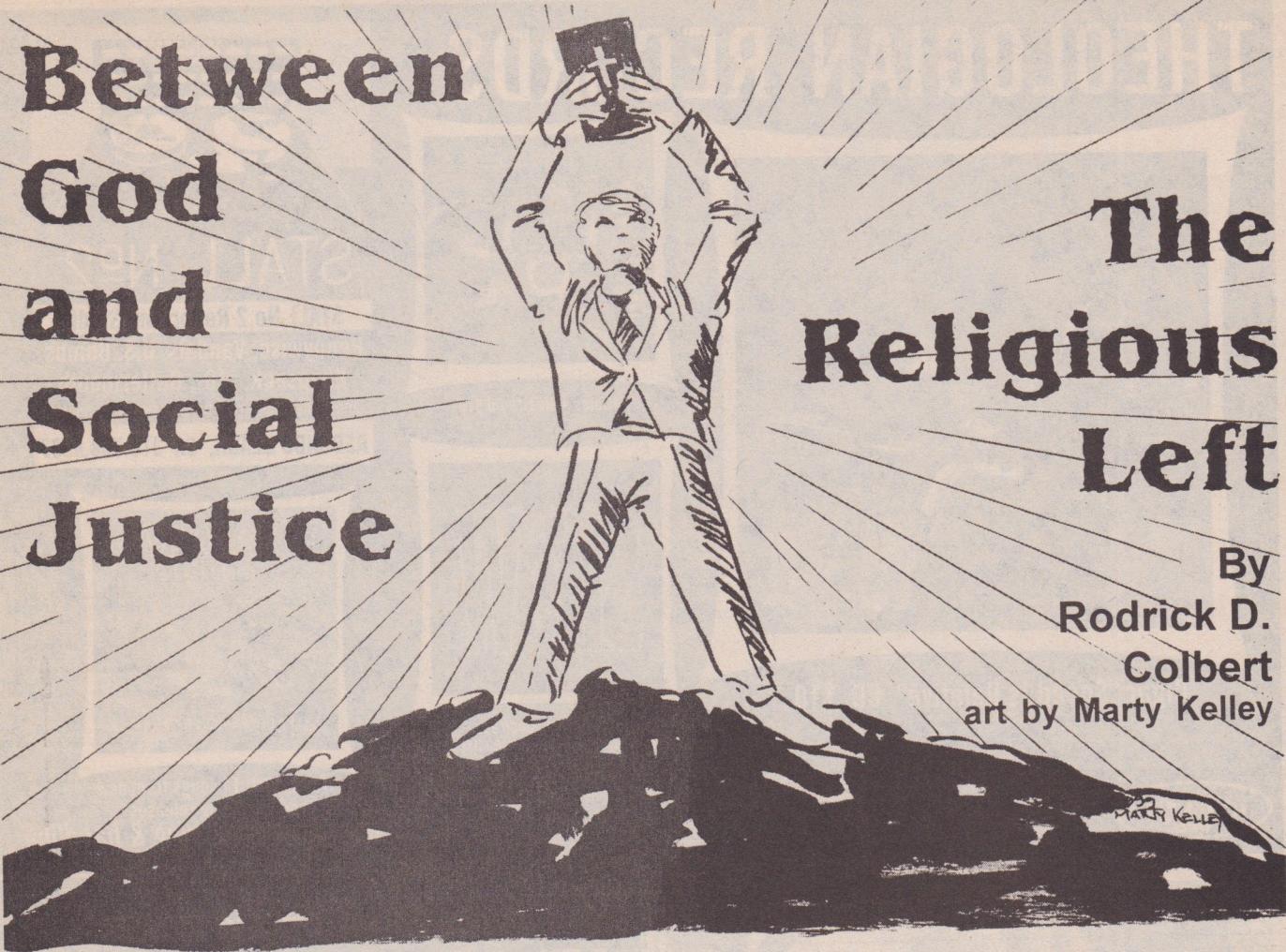
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Between God and Social Justice

The Religious Left

By
**Rodrick D.
Colbert**
art by Marty Kelley



**"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth;
I came not to send peace, but a sword."**

- Words of Jesus Christ, Matthew 10:34

What often gets lost in the debate on social advancement is the involvement of religion and religious movements. This is easily understandable. Religious institutions have long been perceived as highly conservative and traditional; reluctant to change.

However, a much deeper historical research of religion reveals just the contrast. Religion has always been at the forefront of social change. Further, for those of us involved in left-oriented, progressive activism, the inclusion of religious and faith-based organizations is not only a necessary component, but also, an excellent, effective means of facilitating social change.

To begin, the antagonism between religion and progress is famous. Marx's denunciation of religion as the opiate of the masses, Freud's brilliant book, "The Future of an Illusion," and Nietzsche's declaration that "God is Dead," all paint the picture that religion actively hinders human potentiality.

However, when put into historical context, many religions, at their conception, indeed brought forth radical thought.

Early Judaism, for instance, took human understanding from polytheism to a more abstract, intellectual monotheism. Furthermore, the teachings of Gautama Buddha instructed that human consciousness could be elevated so that enlightenment could be achieved without an intercessor or revealed religion.

Likewise, Christ Jesus taught that the greatest commandments was that you must love God with your whole heart, mind, soul, and strength and that you must love your neighbor as yourself. According to Mark 12:30, 21, "There is none other commandment greater than these."

The Bahai Faith controversially teaches that religious truth is not absolute, but relative and represents the "ever-changing face of God." According to late Shoghi Effendi who carried the designation as the Guardian of the Faith, "Divine Revelation is continuous and progressive and that the Founders of all past religions, though different in the non-essential aspects their teachings, 'abide in the same Tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated on the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same faith.'

These are just a few examples. A much more in depth study of comparative religions come to the same conclusion; religion is fluid.

As regards religious movements, without question, the American

civil rights movement's connection to religion stands as the best example of active progressive change based on faith. Dr. Martin Luther King as the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference made the denial of African-Americans right to vote a moral issue. The metaphor of a "Moses" leading his people to the Promised Land of equality was an unstoppable galvanizing force for political change. Indeed, Dr. King's use of Christian allegory is what outraged the white supremacists the most. Fundamentally, an effective tool against any oppressor, even more so than violence, is to call into question the morality of the oppression. This is what Dr. King did successfully, although paying for it with his life.

In like manner, in reaction to the plethora of right wing US sponsored Latin American dictators; many leaders of the Catholic faith turned to the politics of liberation theology.

As the Second Vatican Council of the early sixties as the foundation, many left-wing liberation theologians looked to Marxist or Neo-Marxist ideas intermingled with Jesus' commitment to the poor and the downtrodden in their criticism of the blatant extremes of wealth in Latin America. Plus, the U.S. support for right-wing authoritarian regimes called into question the morality of the American economic system of capitalism.

For example, Nicaragua, after the Sandinista revolution, is when Liberation Theology reached its highest pitch. Many priests openly aligned themselves with the socialist government. Ernesto Cardenal, a well-known priest-poet, became the Minister of Culture. As the ideological conflict spread in Central America, so did the ideology. El Salvador's top Catholic prelate, Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980 after suggesting that violence may not be ruled out in resistance to the right wing CIA-sponsored elements. His biographer, Placido Erdozain quoted the Archbishop saying,

"Christians are not afraid of combat. They know how to fight, but they prefer the language of peace. However, when a dictatorship seriously violates human rights and attacks the common good of the nation, when it becomes unbearable and close all channel of dialogue of understanding, of rationality, when this happens, the church speaks of the legitimate right of insurrectional violence."

An another well-known example is the Quaker-inspired Fellowship of Reconciliation. This group calls for an unequivocal, international, multifaith opposition to war and military production. This is an extension of their historical opposition to slavery.

Pax Christi and the Catholic Workers are two progressive faith-based organizations profoundly committed to social justice. Sister Helen Prejean, a nun, has made the abolition of capital punishment her life's work.

What all this demonstrates is that religion makes

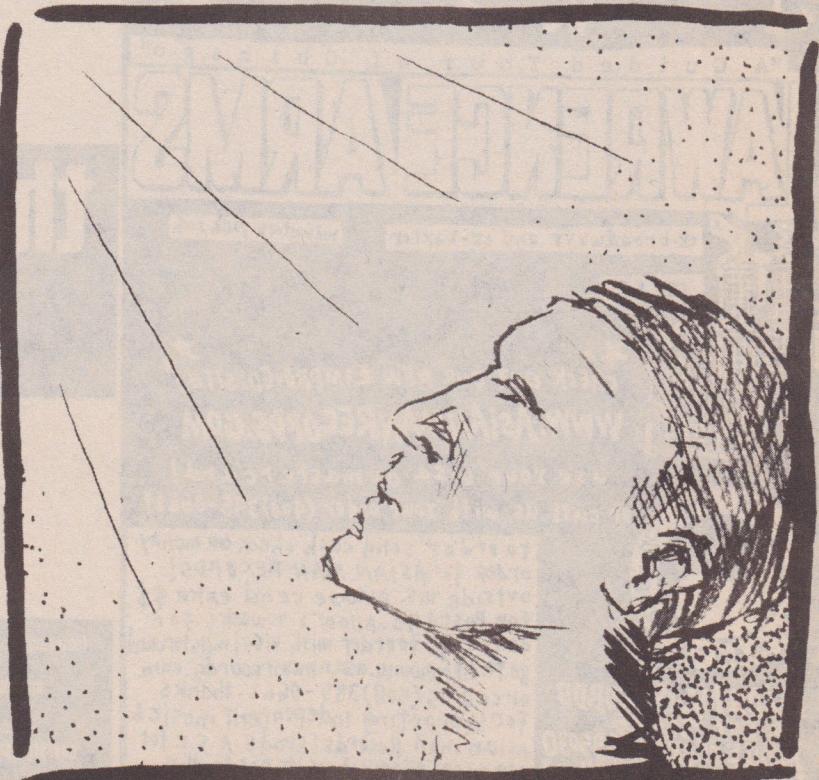
claim to the highest level of ethics and morality. As such, when confronted with clear cases of oppression, religion has no choice to lead in the resistance to the oppressors.

The late renowned psychiatrist, Erich Fromm, wrote in his book, Psychoanalysis and Religion.

"In authoritarian religion, God is a symbol of power and force. He is supreme because He has supreme power, and man [people in general, of course] in juxtaposition is utterly powerless...Humanistic religion, on the contrary, is centered around man and his strength. Man must develop his power of reason in order to understand himself, his relationship to his fellow men, and his position in the universe. He must develop his powers of love for others as well as for himself and experience the solidarity of all living beings. Inasmuch as humanistic religions are theistic, God is a symbol of man's own powers which he tries to realize in his life, and is not a symbol of force and domination, having power over man."

There we have it. It is the difference between Jerry Falwell and Reverend Jesse Jackson, between the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Dalai Lama, between the religious Right and the religious Left. For one, religion is power. For the other, it is empowering.

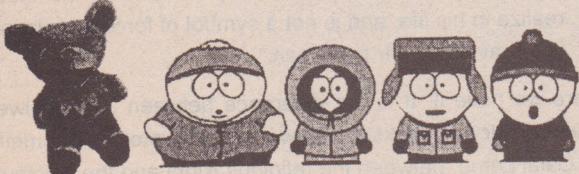
This is the true meaning of the quote by Jesus Christ cited at the beginning of this essay. The meaning is not that Jesus would literally be an armed violent revolutionary. But, rather the sword stands for the violent clashing of the introduction of new ideas that would bring about change and by extension, the betterment of humanity.



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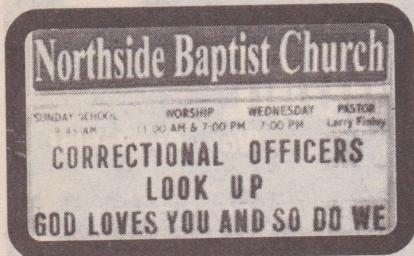
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"Big House" of Horrors



reads the sign in front of Northside Baptist Church in Raiford, Florida. It reflects the controversy brewing inside the Florida State Prison just a half-mile away. Any reasonable citizen would think God is the only one who would love

the nine prison guards accused of beating Frank Valdez to death inside the X-Wing of Florida State Prison. However in this small town, where the prison is the largest employer, most residents try to avoid the issue of officer violence entirely. Soon, however, it will be a hard bullet to dodge as the debate over the handling of the prisoners in the system becomes the center of several federal investigations around the country.

by
Scott
Bledsoe

art by
Marty Kelley

Breaking the 'code of silence' presents the most formidable obstacle in the way of Federal and State investigators' search for the truth. Even inmates, fearing that Mr. Valdez's fate awaits them, refuse to speak up about abuses at Florida State Prison.

However, with the help of Miami Attorney Don Cohn, at least thirteen prisoners at Florida State Prison, Butler Correctional, and New River Correctional Facility are coming forward to sign written affidavits about the physical abuses occurring there. Horrifying stories of beatings, torture, and abuse radiate from these houses of holding for a prison population which according to the warden of New River Correctional Facility (directly across from the main State Prison), is composed of 70-80% non-violent offenders.

Cohn became interested in the case after his client, Gary Waid began writing him letters of the abuse that occurs at the prison. Gary is a federal marijuana prisoner, who is serving a nine-year sentence for conspiracy to import marijuana. Gary Brooks Waid sits in the Florida prison system after he was traded to the state system last year under Executive Order #98-188 signed by Gov. Chiles. Thirty drug offenders, all model prisoners, were sent to Florida with then Governor Chiles claiming the deal was to save Florida money.

Attracting the attention of prison officials, Gary found himself stripped and placed in the "hole" after he wrote letters to the Miami Herald describing the masochistic and routine beatings occurring to other inmates. His official infraction remains listed as "typing". Apparently inmates must rely on good ol' Crayola in Florida State Prisons to write letters. Gary's attorney responded by showing him how to collect affidavits from the hurt prisoners.

At least nineteen prisoners are talking to the press and Mr. Cohn about beatings, including one prisoner we will call Mr. Most (identity withheld for protection) who claims he was beaten so badly he was bleeding from every orifice in his body.

One very shocking prisoner affidavit claims that guards shouted obscenities and racial slurs such as, "You Niggers are always stealing on the streets," as he was repeatedly kicked in the ribs. The prisoner also claims he never received medical attention for his injuries. One by one the other affidavits received by Cohn describe the tortures in blistering detail: knees to the groin, mace to the eyes while already restrained, midnight beatings, and threats of death if anyone ever told.

One grandmother from Key West has taken on the banner for Gary and the beaten prisoners. Kay Lee, an activist for Medical Marijuana Reform, has been inspired to camp out on the lawn of the Florida State Prison at least one Saturday per month until Warden Crosby meets a list of demands which she has created.

The demands, which ensure prisoners will not be beaten, and if they are, that someone will take responsibility to ensure it doesn't

get repeated, have so far been avoided by the warden. Activists helping Kay have even been asked to leave from the roadside of the state road in front of the prison. Yet, Ms. Lee continues on in her quest. Just as Waid and Cohn continue in theirs.

While Cohn is examining his options for bringing civil suits against the Florida Department of Corrections on behalf of the beaten prisoners, the debate about prison guard violence has sparked new questions and resurrected old ones about the prison environment in America. There are many politicians out there that cow-tow to ignorant millions of Archie Bunker wannabes. Unfortunately this is the 20% of American society who regularly go to the polls. Therefore, instead of solving the mental, economic, and social problems of prisoners, which reduce recidivism rates, US executive officials subscribe to the mob mentality of revenge and punishment. This, in turn, gets them elected to cram more money in kickbacks for corporations like Wackenhut (the largest private prison management company in the United States).

According to Amnesty International, who used the 1998-1999 fiscal year to turn its attention to the sad state of prison conditions in the United States, "More than 1.7 million people are in prisons or jails in the USA. More than 60% are from racial or ethnic minorities. Over half are black. Since 1980 the number of inmates has more than tripled; the number of women inmates has quadrupled. Some 77,000 inmates are held in privately run institutions. There have been serious complaints about abuse of inmates and poor conditions in privately run facilities in a number of states."

Reports of beatings in Michigan and Arizona, uncovered by Amnesty International, resulted in lawsuits by the Department of Justice in 1997. Abuses reported by Amnesty International about a Pennsylvania prison resulted in the termination of 20 officers in 1998.

Many critics of the current prison system point, with good reason, to the Stanford Prison Experiments which took place in 1971. Seventy college students took on roles of prisoners, guards, and administrators to get an accurate assessment of prison life and how it affects otherwise normal people. The experiment had to be stopped early when, even though guards were constantly reminded not to resort to violence and dehumanization to maintain control of prisoners, on numerous occasions it happened. Stanford Psychology Professor Philip Zimbardo, who conducted the experiment remarks, "Prisons are failed social-political experiments" that consistently bring out the worst in relations between people "because the public is indifferent to what takes place in secret there, and politicians use them, fill them up as much as they can,

to demonstrate only that they are tough on crime. . . . They are as bad for the guards as the prisoners in terms of their destructive impact on self-esteem, sense of justice and human compassion."

Unfortunately, America's leaders have failed to learn from this experiment, which seems to have been dead-on accurate all those years ago. Until there is a major paradigm shift amongst those who determine the management of prisons, the training of guards, and the relationships with those housed in corrections facilities, this problem continues to get worse. With the projections of many criminal justice experts, including the Department of Justice, that at least 10% of the US population will be incarcerated by 2015, this problem may become an all too real nightmare for any one of us.

Make an IMPACT

Information on Force Reforms at Florida State Prison contact Kay Lee in Key West @ mrijah@flakesol.com or Donald Cohn at 305-324-1649

Amnesty International's USA Rights For All Campaign
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/rightsforall>

The Prison Issues Desk: Source for progressive and radical info on prisons
<http://www.prisonactivist.org/>

Prison Activists: A resource for prison-related organizations
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Center for Rational Correctional Policy
<http://pierce.simplenet.com/>

Human Rights Watch Prison Project
<http://www.hrw.org/advocacy/prisons/>



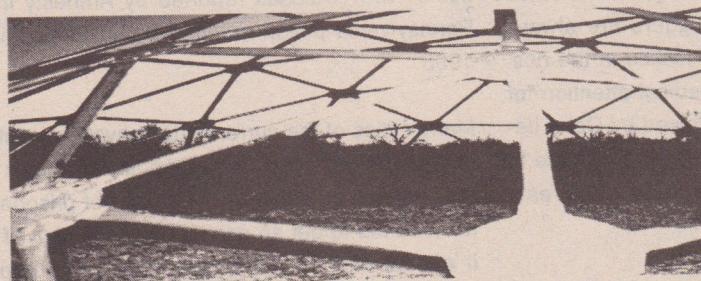
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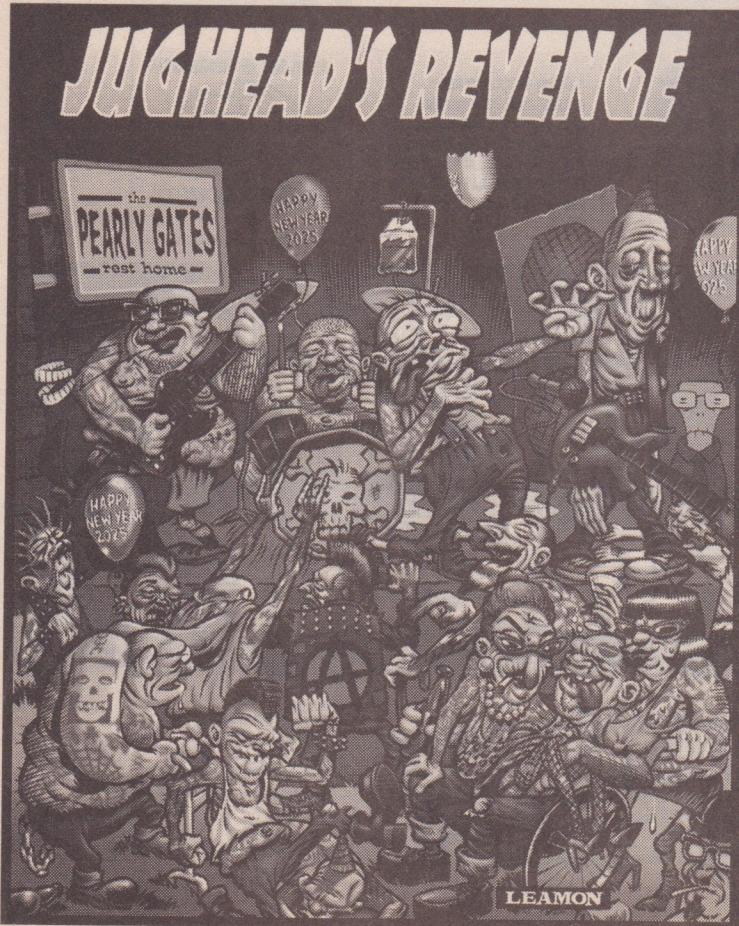
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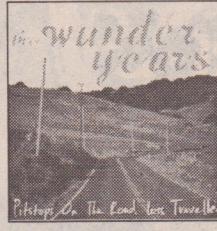
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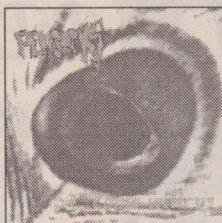
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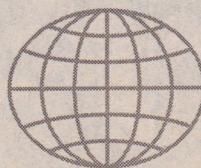


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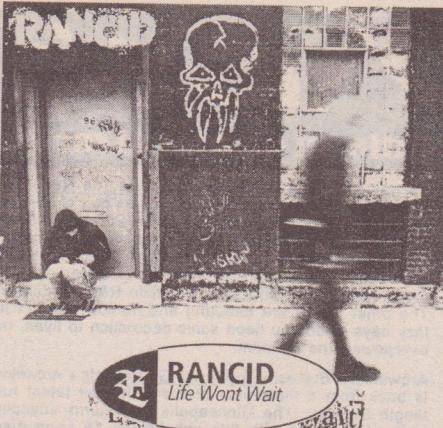
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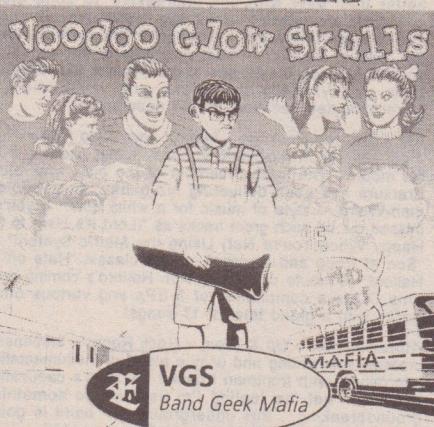
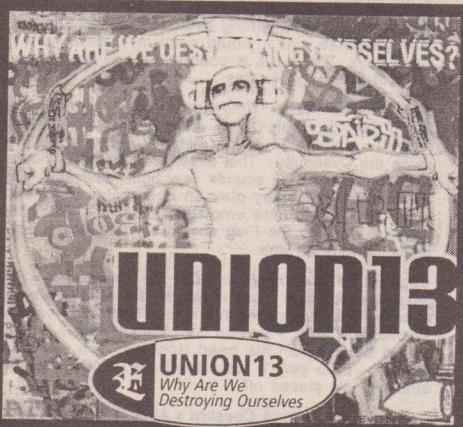
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22 Jacks • Going North • Side One • This is cool pop-punk. It seems almost more pop than punk but it still has enough of an edge to make it good. Twelve songs including Medicated, On My Way and Highway make this a cool disc to include in your collection.

Acid King • Busse Woods • Man's Ruin Records • Dark, moody, melancholic and black are just some of the adjectives I could use to describe Acid King's music. Beautiful female vocals echo through your head as the downtuned guitars create the mid tempo background.

Alkaline Trio • I Lied My Face Off • Asian Man Records • This 4-song EP has great healing properties... fast and furious but melodic and emotional... when the four combine and live together in relative peace and harmony, there exists an equilibrium of soporific mirth. Um, at least there is for me. It's very cool and highly recommended.

American Football • Self-Titled • Polyvinyl Records • These guys enjoy slow tempo, introspective tunes that feature a lot of string picking and intricate drumming. I can just picture them gazing at their shoes. They also enjoy interweaving cyclical patterns that create a trance-like musical background. You may recognize Mike Kinsella from his previous work with Joan of Arc and Cap'n Jazz.

American Heritage • Why Everyone Gets Cancer • Rosewoodunion Records • Guitar, Drums, Bass. That's all you get with American Heritage. But you get so much more. You get hurried, fast paced experimental instrumental rock that defies convention. The songs don't even have names. Only numbers. And even then, the numbers are not in order! If you like Don Caballero or C4AM95, you should love this one.

Appleseed Cast/Planes Mistaken for Stars/Race Car Riot • Split EP • Deep Elm Records • This seven song ep serves as a nice introduction to these three bands on the emo label Deep Elm. Planes Mistaken for Stars leads off with the previously unreleased "Staggerswallowswell." Race Car Riot follows with three songs, including the impressive "Racing California." But the EP's finest performance is by the final band, Appleseed Cast. The Kansas quartet's "Tale of the Aftermath" captures the band's raw power and Chris Crisci's stunning vocals. Their final track, "Remedios the Beautiful," is a quiet, haunting song punctuated by ghostly feedback. These are three excellent performances by some of Deep Elm's finest.

Archer Prewitt • White Sky • Carrot Top Records • Archer Prewitt may be known to some as part of The Sea and the Cake or his comic book titled Sof' Boy. He was also a part of a proto-lounge act that went indy-rock a few months before lounge broke big. Curses! He's an accomplished musician, as this disc is testament. The music here verges on early 70's white R&B on "Shake." The other tracks are beautiful and mellow, perfect for lazy days when you need sonic decoration to liven, not overpower, the moment.

Arcwelder • Everest • Touch and Go Records • Arcwelder is back from a three-year hiatus with their latest full-length *Everest*. The Minneapolis trio returns sounding better than ever with this impressive 15 song disc. Arcwelder are known for their aggressive, melodic rock, and they certainly don't disappoint this time around. But, one of *Everest*'s finest moments is the acoustic-driven "Will You Stay?" one of many tunes that deserve radio airplay. Let's hope these guys won't take any more extended vacations in the near future.

Atom and His Package • Making Love • No Idea • He's a one-man show, keyboard in hand, humor spewing from his mouth. The former member of the punk rock band Fracture has been delivering his quirky, much-cooler-than-Weird-Al style of music for a while now. If you've missed out on such great tracks as "Lord It's Hard to Be Happy When You're Not Using the Metric System" or "Son of Poop and George", or the classic "Hats off to Halford" (a tribute of sorts to Rob Halford's coming out). This CD is a compilation of 3 EPs and various other tracks with a grand total of 17 songs!

Atomsmasher • Up & Atom • Rock Room • Immensely creative songwriting and unique blend of instrumentation intermingle with frontman Edward Marshall's captivating vocals. I get the feeling I'm listening to something groundbreaking... this underground NY band is going places the likes of which no god has ever seen.

Autobody • Hotbody • Silly Bird Records • A HA! THESE were the bastards playing in the apartment for the past three years! This is noise pop. There are a lot of weird sounds and mixing tricks in here so prepare to get spaced out. This was obviously recorded in someone's bedroom. Maybe you and a couple friends could chip in and buy this for fun.

Bitchy • Black Socks And Happiness • Thick Records • Punk stuff from this foursome. It's not bad, pretty tight and some nice twang guitars in there. By the way, the cover tells you right there "Chaz Linde: yelling, guitar." Be warned.

Boxcar Satan • Days Before the Flood • Compulsive Records • This trio from Texas "specializes in pouring a particularly ugly brand of self-loathing noise from the demon bottle." They also use and endorse "shitty, broken down equipment." Their influences range from post-punk noisemakers like Birthday Party, Scratch Acid and early Pere Ubu to Delta blues and free jazz. Featured on their full-length debut is a cover of Screamin' Jay Hawkins's "Feast of the Mau Mau."

Brandston • Fallen Star Collection • Deep Elm Records • Cleveland rocks! First there was Drew Carey, now this Ohio emo foursome. On their sophomore effort *Fallen Star Collection*, Brandston adds some new elements to their sound. More upbeat, pop-influenced tunes and slower ballads fit in nicely with the band's aggressive, melodic rock. Myk Porter's expressive vocals are a highlight throughout the album. This is some good stuff, so enough with all the Cleveland jokes already.

Brother's Keeper/Dlsembody • Split CD • Trustkill Records • Brother's Keeper has been around for a while now, I think this is the second disc of theirs I've reviewed. They haven't changed a bit - good ole hardcore with just an extra touch of funk to getcha movin'. Dlsembody only has one song on this CD and, frankly, I'm OK with that. This is basically psychedelic metal for the 90's (or is it 2000?). Overdone harmonies, screaming vocals...no thanks. By the way, track seven is endless answering machine messages that you don't think you'll listen to but you will. You'll keep trying to turn it off but you won't be able to. I'm still listening to it right now.

Budhi Brown's Wicked Circus • Some Kinda Liquor • Green Room Records • This album caught me by surprise. The vocals are similar to a restrained Guy of Fugazi, and the music lucidly driven by seductive basslines and saxophone. It's an interesting jazz/lounge feel with the vocals bowing me over. This is definitely worth seeking

out, particularly if you enjoy Fugazi, Morphine, or are craving a new sultry sound.

Bunjie Jambo • Potty Karate • Grappler Unlimited • Their promotional material lists a whole slew of bands that these guys have been likened to, but frankly, I don't see much of it. It is decent funky, SKA with a few really good tunes, but for the most part, it is fairly standard issue music. They do cover an AC/DC tune, and they do it well, but as a diehard, lifelong AC/DC fan, I say leave it to them....

Buried Alive • The Death of Your Perfect World • Victory Records • This is super fierce hardcore. The riffs are fast and furious. The songs are tight and well constructed. I'm getting a vague premonition that this is straight edge hardcore. I hope I'm wrong because I've had enough of that nonsense and it would spoil my high regard for these guys. The music is good and if you like hardcore you will definitely like this.

Capture the Flag • Time and Again • Conquer the World Records • This Detroit area trio has been playing together since high school, when they went by the name the Ovenmitts. That experience together shows, as *Capture the Flag* sounds very tight musically. On *Time and Again*, they play an aggressive pop-punk style, with some more emo-style material. With this release, *Capture the Flag* should be capturing a new legion of fans as well.

Cataract Falls • The Sound Of Your Breath Still • self-release • Holy shit. This is the angriest music I've ever heard. This guy makes Aloneness Morisette look like Winnie the Pooh. I kid you not. Without music this guy would have blown his head right off. On yeah, the review - Emo punk? Emo hardcore? Whatever, it's emo and it's pissed off.

Caustic Resin • Thick Question • Alias Records • Names like Built to Spill, the Grifters, Mudhoney, Pere Ubu and the Screaming Trees pop up when listening to Caustic Resin. Lots of heavy guitars framed around a stoned out ambience with lethargic, echo-y vocals. This is one of the better albums I've heard in a while.

Chalkline • In The Present Tense • Shandle Records • I've seen Chalkline's name around so they're not newbies. This is the first time I've heard them though, so I'm the newbie. My take: not bad. They mix it up a lot. They have some punk in there, hardcore, even alterna-pop. It's not too bad. A little garage-ish sounding, so if you're into that you'll dig it.

Cletus • Horseplay Leads to Tragedy • Johanns Face Records • Cletus is at it again, laying down some catchy punk while maintaining their sense of humor. Starting off with "Christine's a Lesbian," about an ex's sexual exploration, Cletus sets a tone they will carry for the rest of the album. You'll probably like them if you're a fan of Guttermouth or The Queers.

Cleveland Bound Death Sentence • self-titled • Lookout! • If you were wondering when Lookout would release another really great album, wait no longer. This is the best Lookout release in years, as far as I'm concerned. Featuring Dillinger Four co-vocalist Patrick playing bass and handling most of the vocal duties, Aaron (yes, Cometbus) on drums, Spitball on "just" guitars (as the CD sleeve states) and Emily doing a killer job on guitar and adding an awesome female vocalist touch, this is a band to fall in love with. The music is punk rock, the way it's meant to be. It definitely has elements of the D4 stuff that Patrick does. The melodies are constant but still allow the music to be rough and intense at times. The tracks keep coming, keep rockin' and keep me listening!

Coal Chamber • Chamber Music • Roadrunner Records • Though the first vocal track "Tragedy" owes a debt to Korn in its rhyme structure, Coal Chamber have impressed me with their second release. The music intermixes synth sounds and rock for some really interesting textures ranging from new wave to mosh, with an emphasis on mid tempo structures. Though the subject matter leans on the angry side, they put out an good if brief version of "Shock the Monkey" featuring guest vocals by Ozzy Osbourne. If you're in a bitter foul mood and want some well produced music to steep in, put this on your shopping list.

Combatwoundedveteran • I Know a Girl Who Develops Crime Scene Photos 12" • No Idea • It hurts, my ears are bleeding. This is an audio assault - speedcore at its finest. Screaming, insane vocals coupled with rapid fire

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punk rock/hardcore. It comes on rad bluish vinyl with a great book/insert and has enough music to kill you. Beware!

Dan Potthast • Eyeballs • Asian Man Records • This is a departure from Dan Potthast's work with ska favorites MU330. This starts with a ska-ish acoustic guitar driven track featuring Potthast's distinct voice. This moves towards upbeat and introspective acoustic guitar numbers accompanied by harmonica and bass. This truly embodies that saying "It's so crazy it just might work." That his first solo release would be fully acoustic would have many MU330 fan's scratching their heads, yet I'm sure any listener would much appreciate being in the audience singing along to these catchy songs.

Dehumanized • Problems First • New Red Archives • Punk from the Bay Area, plain and simple. It's pretty good and the vocalist makes it fun to listen to. He's not Mr. Angry Punk Singer I've grown to avoid. I like this disc.

Denver Zest • Denver Zest vs. Peekskill Sizzle • Zest • Apparently these guys are having flashbacks to their early childhood's, or maybe this is an album intended for elementary school students. With songs like "I Don't Wanna Learn How to Swim" and "What Are We Gonna Be When We Grow Up?" it's hard to tell. There's even a song about forgetting one's homework. (I still have that nightmare, too, as well as the one where I've forgotten about the "big test", or I go to school naked; but enough about me and my neurosis.) This is cool garage pop, perfect for elementary school students through college grads.

Dharmachine • Bang! • self-released • This is cool. I really like this CD. It's kind of a slow Filter thing, maybe not as hard though, but with a progressive edge. Confused yet? It's definitely rock but it has some cool textures that make it different. Especially track three, which is altogether different from anything I've heard.

DJ T-Rock • Who's Your Daddy? • Bomb Hip-Hop Records • Atlanta's DJ T-Rock, part of the Citizen DJ crew, claims to have fathered a turntable. His songs focus on a non-human turntablist who possesses skills so precise and advanced, they are bionic. If you enjoy scratch music, this release is for you. Mid tempo beats set the backdrop for DJ T-Rock's impressive command of the 1200s.

Endeavor • Don't Die With Your Eyes Closed • Trustkill Records • Hardcore, man. Hard-fing-core. These guys are intense. I looked at the cover and saw titles like "Wanna Play Cards, Rowdy Roddy Piper's Pot Pie, Famous Potatoes" and "Luke Perry And The Sweatlodge" and thought it was going to be harmless. Never judge a book, right? Exactly. This band is pure power.

Eureka Farm • The View • Loosegroove Records • Eureka Farm describe their music as "homeopathic remedies for the sciencefictionally challenged." In-depth orchestration, complex melodies, thickly textured instrumentation, and beautiful vocal harmonies, comprise "The View." The album was recorded on and around the actual Eureka Farm, relying on little more than microphone placement to achieve the different sounds.

Fall Silent • Super Structure • Revolutionary Power Tools • Fall Silent is a band I've heard of but never heard until now. This is quite an amazing release, rising above hardcore and metal standards. I'm partial to "Great White Death" and "What Should I Do," as both deal the American tragedy of being part of the American workforce (jobs you hate) from the perspective of someone who actually works a shit job to support themselves. That's one thing that separates Fall Silent - the sincerity that belies the rage expressed in some tracks comes from age and it's experience, no longer content to ride on the angry young kid bandwagon. The twenty-something rage in effect here is all the more potent for its optimism and self determination. Heck, check out there faithful cover of Journey's "Any Way You Want It." If that doesn't rock you out, nothing will.

Fastbacks • The Day that Didn't Exist • spinART Records • Together for twenty years, the Fastbacks have consistently put out pop-punk music that continues to entertain. "The Day..." is somewhat of a concept album centered around (surprise) a day that didn't exist. Singer/Bassist Kim Warnick's voice, though soothing, has a quality that makes you feel she could belt out some powerful screams, if she wanted to.

Fatal Blast Whip • Seduction • Blacklight Records •

Included in this CD are four remixes of the title track and three other songs, all of the industrial type. The remixes are done by Battery, Pivot Clow, Joshua Bourke and Scar Tissue. FBW features static-charged soundscapes, frenzied rhythms and duel vocalists layered atop an electro-cosmic foundation.

Filibuster • Deadly Hi-Fi • Cornerstone R.A.S./Skunk Records • After a grueling tour schedule (including one through Europe with the Skatalites), Filibuster got back in the studio, under the guidance of legendary producer Steve Albini, to record "Deadly Hi-Fi." Their mixture of sounds, a style some call "streetsteady," blends rocksteady, ska, punk and even hip-hop throughout this 13 song CD. This time out, Filibuster sounds a bit more focused than their previous release, "The Means."

Fireball Ministry • Ou Est La Rock? • Bong Load Records • If church was like this, maybe I'd be a religious fellow. It's nice to see some people doing the rock thing. This is straight ahead power rock in the Motorhead, Black Sabbath vein. Crunching power chords and bass heavy rhythm make this disc almost seem like something old. It is not. It is new. It is good.

Four Letter Word • Zero Visibility (Experiments With Truth) • BYO Records • This is a cool disc full of rocking punk. The songs are aggressive sounding, but still have some melodic feel to them. Music has not taken a back seat to either speed or anger here. This is a twelve song disc and all of them are good.

Guy Smiley • Alkaline • Devil Doll Records • I can see Guy Smiley making a lot of people happy. Straddling pop-punk and hardcore with damn good vocals, this group of Canucks speak out about male responsibility in unwanted pregnancies, keeping your dreams alive, and being a friend for those in need, as it seems they've lost a few friends to suicide. The only confusing items is "Seventeen Forever," which states "...growing old means nothing when you stay the same/I will not change, I'm going to stay the same." Though they have a faulty approach to growth, this is music for the kids by aging kids.

Hankshaw • Nothing Personal • No Idea Records • This CD was actually first released on Network Sound Records in 1996. Then that label went under, so Hankshaw was left out in the cold. This is a reissue of "Nothing Personal," released by the Gainesville-based No Idea Records. Hankshaw plays some pretty punchy alternapunk. As I was listening to this the first time, I was commenting to a friend how much I enjoyed the female vocals, when he pointed out that the lead singer is a guy! I was fooled! Anyway, he's pretty good. I would definitely recommend picking this one up.

Hardknox • self-titled • Jive Electro Records • British duo Hardknox combines the best elements of hip-hop, breakbeat, and hard rock to blast their way into your living room with their self-titled debut. Legendary rapper Schoolly D guest raps in the single "Come In Hard (I Don't Like Rock & Roll)." Over the top breakbeats, metallic riffs, and even sitar and harmonica samples are used to create a heavier-than-usual style. I hope your speakers can handle it!

Hilkka • The Beautiful Aesthetician • Carbon Records • Hmm... I think this would be filed under Emo. It's faster than Emo though, maybe it's more power-pop. Yeah, let's go with power pop. But, wait, they're slowing down again. OK, look, if you like Emo or power pop, you should check this out. Oh, and don't even read the song titles, it makes no sense when you hear the songs.

Hot Water Music • No Division • Some Records • Although I've never been a real fan of HWM, I'd heard plenty from the long-standing Florida fans I knew. But the music never grabbed me. Until now. This new album has gained HWM a new fan. There are many times this record reminds me of the best of FUEL, not the new mainstream radio band, but the punk rock one. The vocals are gruff (but not overly so), the music is lined with intricacies (you really want to listen to hear what's going on) and the lyrics are incredibly good. Melodies run thick, en-

ergy is high, singing along is a must!

Integ2000/Fear Tomorrow • Split CD • East Coast Empire • Shredding with a hint of metal on here, especially Integ2000. It's not bad stuff but it's not great either. The guitarist for Integ2000 is pretty wicked, if you're into that kind of thing.

John Stuart Mill • Forget Everything • SeeThru Broadcasting • John Stuart Mill features former members of Brainiac, whose promising career was tragically cut short by a fatal car accident involving keyboardist/vocalist Tim Taylor. The songs on *Forget Everything* are reminiscent of Pavement's early Drag City-era material, with touches of Sebadoh and Guided by Voices in the mix. Fans of lo-fi indie pop/rock should enjoy this debut effort.

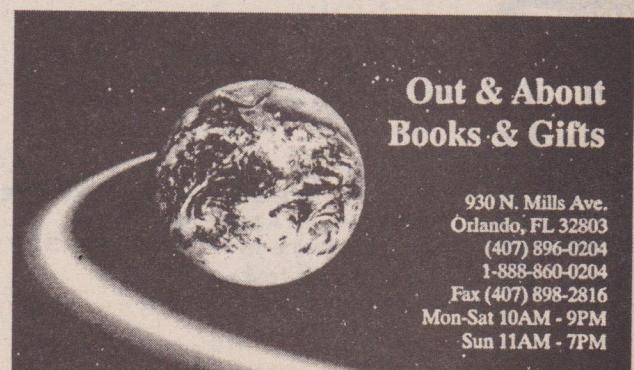
Lonely Kings • What If? • Fearless Records • This is a love it or hate it release. You'll either really be taken by the pop-punk melodies or you'll pass on this. The vocals are extremely powerful, as are the melodies. The lyrics are a lot more mature than 99% of the other pop-punk groups, trading out goofiness for a realistic assessment of the world. The cool thing are the driving melodies that fuel the joy of escapism and lift you to happiness or to expel rage, allowing you to listen to the oft-serious lyrics at your discretion. This is the rare pop-punk record that has enough substance to become a personal treasure.

Luck of Aleia • Six Songs EP • Caulfield Records • You remember that guy in junior high chorus? Not much of a voice, but it went to his head because he got the lead in "Oklahoma" so he formed a garage band with his older cousin or something and kept everybody up nights trying to sound heartfelt? Somebody should have told him he sucked. Otherwise you end up with bands like this one. Six extremely plain songs of love and various higher emotions on a nicely-shaped CD that melts real good in a tire fire, I'll bet.

Luna • The Days of Our Nights • Jericho Records • Dropped from Elektra after already having recorded their latest album, Luna found their way to this new label (started by Smiths producer John Porter and Andrew Lauder, ex-head of Silvertone Records U.K.), prepared to deliver their same brand of sweet and groovy indie pop. And they've succeeded. Although this doesn't match the quality of my favorite Luna album, Bewitched, it is still a damn fine piece of work, characterized by Dean Wareham's sensitive and personal vocals. The music goes from soft to poppy but never becomes anything you could call upbeat, and Luna is better off that way.

Matt Wilson • Tambourine Girl • Locked Groove Entertainment • Wilson is a Central Florida musician who, on this 9-track record, delivers mainstream pop-rock ("adult contemporary") that will not amaze, but also won't bore you. It's got plenty of rhythm and pop-appeal in a Billy Joel way and shows that Matt Wilson is an above average singer/songwriter/pianist and more!

Metroschifter • Strawberries • Doghouse Records • Unusual. Not in a bad way, but also not in a good way. Metroschifter puts together multiple samples and live instruments that fly from rage to softness to downright discordant. Highlight of the album is a remake of the Kentucky state song "My Old Kentucky Home". With only six tracks (some very long) this album gives you a good taste of this unusual Louisville band.



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QUICKIES

A little bit on a lot of records.

mij • self-titled EP • Caulfield Records • Pretty damn impressive for a debut EP. The lead singer of this Mid-western trio has an understated but great voice that she wraps around some emotional guitar work, especially on the all-too-short last song, "this will end". Definitely the kind of band you'd love to check out live.

Millenium • Kaos Theory • House of Abdul • I admit it, I picked this CD to review entirely by its cover: Some beautiful acid art. I have never been so wrong. Hardcore rap was not what I was expecting, but once I got a few tracks in, I liked it. Anomaly (that's his name) is the best of the three rappers featured on this House of Abdul comp. Ease up on the pictures of your "posse".

Model American • self-titled • Sessions Records • This is pretty good punk. It is a little on the aggressive side, but good stuff. There is almost a hardcore feel to the disc and you can definitely tell that there are hardcore roots in this band. Some of the highlights that you will want to hear are Filthy and Ronald Raygun. This is a band that you will be hearing more of soon.

Muler • motelbibleschool EP • Carbon Records • When Muler's album came out a couple years ago, I was so happy. They rocked! And then they vanished. Oh, blessed reappearance! This 6-song EP is another example of their quirky indie pop, loaded with melodies. The vocals are awesome, a bit whiny at times (which is ok), while the music is not the stale, typical emo-indie pop that everyone is playing...it has a charm all its own – endearing and sweet without ever becoming wimpy.

Natas • Cuidad de Brahman • Man's Ruin • Described amusingly by the promo as "perfect sex music," Natas gives us instrumental coolness that is definitely on the level of early Pink Floyd – it has the ability to create vivid pictures in the mind of thousands of words. A doob helps, too. This is really tremendous work. Set the controls for the heart of the sun, baby.

Nice Guy Eddie • Past Modern • Self-Released • This Gainesville quartet gets its name from Chris Penn's character in Quentin Tarantino's film, "Reservoir Dogs." However, the violence that permeates the film is nowhere to be found on Nice Guy Eddie's "Past Modern." Their sounds are almost sweet, with harmonies and rhythms that are catchy and enjoyable. You might be tempted to call this pop-punk because of the electric guitar, but it's really just good ol' pop. Make that very good pop.

Nicotine • Peeeeeeezez! Who are you? • Tomato Head Records • Someone stop these crazy punk rock kids from Japan! They've broken free and now they're rippin' it up on a new CD. The music is melodic punk rock with a fun, Digger-esque attitude (at Lagwagon speed). The vocals are solid and the lyrics are in English, in case you were worried you'd need to learn Japanese.

Nora • self-titled EP • Trustkill • With 5 songs on it, this disc is more of an EP, but it is a good hardcore disc. In an already crowded genre, it is difficult to stand out. Nora seems to have blended skill and genuine love for music into a really good hardcore outfit, which will hopefully throw them to the forefront of their game.

OrangeTree • Fixing Stupid • Jump Up! • Ex-MU330 singer Jason Nelson fronts this new excursion into the vast, aging world of rock-ska and breathes fresh new

life into it, as only an MU330 homeboy could. Every now and then, you gotta bring a little ska back into your life, and why not with a source you trust? And why not now? And why not with an album that will kick your ass until you can't sit down?

Outrider • All In A Hard Day's Work • JFG Records • Blasting out of the San Fran Bay-area come this four-piece rock and roll band. These guys are the kinda of rock that made the airwaves happy in '80s, genuine, feel-good rock – nothing that's gonna pierce your ear-drums, but it also won't lull you to sleep. Add in the keyboards and the great rhythms and you'll be tappin' yer toes in no time!

Peacocks • Come With Us • Tomato Head Records • This three piece rocks out bounce-filled, European pop with a ska swanker, minus the horns. It's a fun, English Beat-ish album - good for the whole family.

Pope Factory • Self-Titled • Buffalo Fire Records • This Canadian group are strong musicians without a singer. The music itself does everything right, nice pop melodies that flow together with surprisingly good production. The vocals are another story. This is where the production is just too much. Piling vocal effects on an average singer doesn't help. Sweet Killings (Track #3) is a gorgeous instrumental. Stick to that.

Quadrifacet/SpeedQueen • split 12" • Carbon Records • Quadrifacet is a five-piece creating winding, surreal pop with fascinating sounds and slow-moving vocals. SpeedQueen is avant-garde music at its finest - noisy, abstract, meandering down a road that never ends.

Racetrailor/Burn It Down • Split CD • Trustkill Records • OK, I need some help. What's the difference between hardcore, grindcore and metal again? Both of these bands have blurred the line. It's loud, hard to understand the lyrics and generally hyper-aggressive. Wait, maybe that's the new title: hyper-aggressive. Six song EP that makes your ears bleed.

Radar Bros. • The Singing Hatchet • See Thru Broadcasting • Two bands immediately came to mind: Son Volt and the Beatles. Not bad company, huh? I didn't say these guys are that good but they're pretty darned good. This is VERY mellow. If they got any mellower they'd pass out. I like it though. It's a very welcome change to the ball-busting punk and hardcore I've been listening to lately. Check it.

Randy • You Can't Keep a Good Band Down • G-7 Welcoming Committee • This Swedish four-piece is brought to us by the same label who puts out Propaganda. So, you can expect that Randy is more than just music...there's politics here as well. And that's a great thing. The music is melodic as hell with a killer energy and a sweet foreign touch. The lyrics are in English and the vocals are super. The music is more than just melodic though. The style isn't stagnant, typical punk rock – it morphs from fast-paced punk rock to rock 'n roll to indie rock to pop. You'll be bobbin' your head and pushing harder on the gas pedal with every new track.

Red Stars Theory • Life in a Bubble Can Be Beautiful • Touch and Go • This reaches that lovely stratosphere shared by dissonant mood setters such as My Bloody Valentine and His Name is Alive. The music drives this atmospheric engine, with vocals and lyrics serving as ornamentation rather than necessities. The instruments are engaging and adventurous, so give this a listen, particularly if you loved the aforementioned bands.

Rising Tide • Scholar's Word • Eden Records • Not normally a reggae fan, but this four-piece band is solid. The usual carribean steel drum sound has been replaced with electronic keyboards, a good substitute that takes some getting used to. The vocals are spot on, but with songs like Kings Music, Our Father and Fallen Angels they lay on the religious theme pretty

thick.

Roger Docking • Ravens & Angels • self-released • This is the first full-length release from Orlando-based singer/songwriter/guitar player Roger Docking. Step one: Solid recording. The entire release sounds good and one of the major downfalls of self-released "local" material is crappy recording, but was done very well. Step two: Docking can write a great hook without hooking you into a song that turns out being simple and without value. Step three: The songs succeed in having a pop-sense without becoming candy-coated. Step four: Docking's songs are just sincere enough to make you care without making you say, "I've heard this before." Step five: The vocals are important (and very good), but unlike a lot of the recent "hit bands", they aren't the only focus. With all five steps done, Docking can now sit back and hope he gets to be one of the lucky ones who actually gets noticed.

Royal Trux • Veterans of Disorder • Drag City Records • I had read quite a bit about Royal Trux before I actually heard any of their music. Given the amount of praise they received, I had built up tremendous expectations that could only lead to an equally tremendous letdown. But many years have passed and I've grown to appreciate Royal Trux. Neil Haggerty and Jennifer Herrema are masters at recycling rock's past and giving the genre's clichés a new twist, as *Veterans of Disorder* proves once again. Neil and Jennifer, I'm sorry I ever doubted you.

Sharks Keep Moving • Self-Titled • Status Records • Somewhat mid-tempo emo stuff. This self-titled album by Sharks Keep Moving alternates between instrumental songs and vocal-driven ones. The instrumental ones remind me a bit of Tristeza, filled with melancholy. This same atmosphere is maintained with lyrics about loss, homesickness and death.

Small Brown Bike • Our Own Wars • No Idea • SBB is a four-piece from Michigan pumping out energized, emotional punk rock that is anything but "emo". Although the extremely gruff, screamed vocals take a little getting used to, the music is a powerful, flowing, melodic force that makes up for any vocal shortcomings. Breakdowns, driving harmonies and intensity are what you'll find buried in these ten tracks.

Spank S'notra • If You Are What You Eat... • Salty Nub Records • This is distortion driven guitar rock, with influences from 60's rock to 80's era Misfits. Always loud, Spank S'notra thunders their way through 10 tracks about love, cyber sex, masturbation and drinking. Just what every growing boy needs.

SpeedQueen • Big Leaves On A Small Tree • Carbon Records • Since 1994, SQ has been creating unusual, "artsy," drum/guitar music. Normally consisting of two musicians (Marc and Joe), the band often invites others to join their improvisational jams. Often compared to other "drone" rock bands, such as DeadC or A Minor Forest, the music can be haunting, driving, soothing and unnerving within seconds of each other. This release came out in 1997. More recently, they released "monosite" (also reviewed).

SpeedQueen • monosite • Carbon Records • This is SQ's first CD since their 1997 release of "Big Leaves..." and the drone keeps on. Sometimes, though, the drone goes on too long for my liking and becomes irritating. I didn't feel this way with their last record. This time around it's one-track, 19 minutes and, although it picks up here and there, it doesn't grab me.

Staring Back • The Mean Streets of Goleta EP • Lobster Records • I've been longing for albums like this to come along. Catchy, fast pop-punk at its finest is what Staring Back serves – and they have the power and emotion to serve it with force and make it stick in your brain. Owl!! Get this CD out of my skull!

Sunday Morning Revival • self-titled EP • self-released • This Orlando-area band is formed from three parts of punk-greats Shyster (Mike, Spanky and Mickey) and one part Ralph. But don't expect anything like Shyster here. This is emotional soul with a country jangle. Going from slow to mid-tempo, SMR delivers sincere music with creative, intricate accuracy. There's a groove in each song that wraps around you. I'm particularly fond on the last track, which is the most upbeat of the five.

Swollen Members • Balance • Battle Axe • Stop the presses...Vancouver knows how to flow, yo! Meet Prevail, Madchild and The Alchemist. The first two provide

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Quickies

A little bit on a lot of records.

the flow and the latter delivers the turntable skills. All aspects are tight, tough and intelligent. The scratches come at the right time, the beats are flexible, from rough to smooth, and the vocal stylings are on-point. Lyrically, SM delivers rhymes that are anything but whack. This ain't no west/east coast copycat crap. This is 18-tracks worth of original beats and brains, another example of how indie hip-hop is where it's at!

Ted Leo • Rx / pharmacists • Germ Blandsten Records • This is what happens when you give a band too much free studio time ... and I mean that in the nicest possible way. This guy does that psychedelic fuzzed-out guitar pop thing for a few songs until he gets bored, then throws in a couple tracks of sci-fi movie sound effects, and maybe a recording of the himself in the shower for laughs. Very Zen. You'll find some good, intelligent songs in here, but Ted Leo makes sure you get to know him along the way.

Teen Idols/Spread • It Found A Voice • Honest Don's • I really like the Teen Idols. It goes well beyond the fact that their bassist, Heather is a babe. They play kick ass rock. They sound like The Ramones meet Green Day meet The Queers, and dammit that's good. Spread is a Japanese punk outfit, none of whom I can figure out. They are definitely better than others I have been subjected to. They play well, but Teen Idols is a tough act to follow.

Teenage Frames • 1% Faster • Jump Up! Records • For their second full-length album, the Teenage Frames enlisted the services of renowned indie-rock producer Steve Albini. Albini and fellow producer Mike Hagler did an excellent job of capturing the spirit of the Frames on tape. Their Ramones and New York Dolls-influenced songs have a very live feel—it's almost as if they're rocking out in your living room. Hope you've got rental insurance.

Telegraph Melts • Ilium • Absolutely Kosher Records • This is an interesting release. Ilium contains six songs prominently featuring just the cello and an electric guitar. Telegraph Melts sounds similar to fellow indie instrumentalists Dirty Three. The interplay between cellist Amy Domingues and guitarist Rob Massey is quite impressive, as the duo melds elements of both classical and post-punk seamlessly. If you're looking for something a little different, this could definitely do the trick.

The Atomiks • Superhonky • 702 Records • This 3 piece outfit features a stand-up bass that gives their rockabilly a little extra punch. Full of guitar licks and reverb, The Atomiks will have you believing it's the 1960's, when they were supposedly created by the U.S government to be Superhuman Soldiers. Something went terribly wrong, and now they may be the human race's only hope. If this is true, why the rockabilly music? Because it's good, that's why.

The Desert Sessions • Volumes V & VI • Man's Ruin Records • Uh, well, ummm...this is going to be tough. I really hope some of you have heard this stuff before because I can't classify it. It started off with crunching rock but then went into some piano and drums thing that I still haven't figured out. It's mainly rock and punk but it's by no means straight-ahead. If you're looking for something different, your search is over.

The FoxyMorons • Calcutta • American Pop Project • The FoxyMorons are an experimental duo from Dallas who bring us cute, lighthearted, poppy folk songs. There's some real budding talent here, some vocals are seamless and some intentionally aren't – it's all about making it fit, and these guys do it with a mellow and fun vigor.

The Frantic Flattops • Rock-n-Roll Murder • Get Hip Recordings • On their third record, Rock-n-Roll Murder, the Frantic Flattops continue to develop their rockabilly sound. Having opened for the likes of Brian Setzer and the Reverend Horton Heat as well as headlining numerous club dates, the Flattops have honed their skills on the road by playing over 250 dates a year. The result is a record that has a very live and immediate feel. If you like your rockabilly sleazy and nasty, this is the way to go my friend.

The Freshmäka • I am the Freshmäka • Moonshine Records • You might have thought to yourself at some point, "I wonder what happened to the DJ from New Kids on the Block after they broke up?" Well, after trying out his luck with some movie soundtracks, and composing songs for the Tae Bo video and MTV's Real World in Seattle, he was discovered while playing at a Bar-Mitzvah

by a record exec. Nowadays, Samuel von Freshmäka, teamed up with producer/percussionist Duke Mushroom, is spinning some of the craziest party music this side of the boy band invasion. Particularly appealing is "The Freshest," with guest rappers Chubb Rock and Tarsha Vega commanding the microphone. Don't be fooled, though. This ain't no bubblegum music. This is serious, sample-heavy, drum loop infused dance floor tunes.

The Get Up Kids • Red Letter Day EP • Doghouse • The Kids are back and fans will be happy. This 5-song EP is a great piece of work, tighter and far better than the Kids last full-length album. Welcome James Dewess, the newest member of the now-quintet band. Dewess was in Coalesce and joins the band to play keyboards (duly noted in this release) and provide backing vocals. If you're looking for hooks, emotion and a creative, unique energy, you'll find it all here.

The Get Up Kids • Something To Write Home About • Vagrant Records • As the review of their EP states, this too is better than their last full-length. But it goes one step further...it's also better than the new EP. Although the new EP is great, this is just that much better. The newly added keyboards are used more effectively; the tunes are absolutely absorbing, sucking you into the hooks, the energy, the drive, the music. I found myself constantly rocking to tune after tune, feeling the emotional crescendos building in me with every song. Unlike the first album, the songs on here give me something new each time, not the same good song, but a new great song each time.

The Irving Klaws • The Pervasonic Sounds of . . . • Get Hip Records • More rockabilly goodness from the Get Hip roster. The Irving Klaws get pervasonic on your ass with their blend of rockabilly and surf rock. Apparently, the long cold winter nights of their native Buffalo have warped their minds, much like their hometown brethren the Goo Goo Dolls. Fortunately for us, the Klaws have been warped in such a fashion that prevents them from releasing over-produced, adult-contemporary ballads to appear in any weepy Meg Ryan flicks. But when Meg finally stars in a b-movie about monsters, aliens, and/or 50-foot women, the Klaws will be ready for the soundtrack.

The Ivy Crown • After So Much Red Wine • Systematic Labor Records • This is the first full-length album for this Michigan quintet. The Ivy Crown's indie rock sound recalls bands such as Ranier Maria, Hum, and the Promise Ring. The album's standout track, "Sleeve" features great vocal harmonies from Keith Babiasz and Andrea Fontana as the music builds and swells around them. *After So Much Red Wine* is a promising debut.

The Ladderback • Honest, I Swear it's the Turnstyles • Bifocal Media • The only fault on this CD is the repetition of chord progressions on a few songs, but otherwise this is a stand up release. "Broken Wings" are about the two most dreaded words in poetry, yet this song flies despite its title. The guitar work throughout is really catchy and accomplished,

and the lyrics are well written though in some songs the themes are so overly emo to the point of cliché. The vocals don't gel well with the songs unless they are at a screaming pitch. All these points are exemplified in such great songs like "A boy and his first paper airplane." If you're a fan of emo, give this a listen.

The Lawrence Arms • A Guided Tour of Chicago • Asian Man Records • This record should be retitled: "A Guided Tour of the Best Punk Album of '99". But that's just my thoughts. Up from the ashes of the great The Broadways come The

Lawrence Arms, who may be even better. The vocals are still the gruff, dedicated, honest ones you got from The Broadways and the lyrics are equally intelligent going from social to political to personal. The music is uptempo, loaded with tempo changes, creativity and punk rock crunch. This is one of those albums that can be played for days straight and still is amazing. This is one of those albums that is so good that I feel a review can't do it justice.

The Loudmouths • Get Lit! • 702 Records • I just got done watching VH-1's "Women of Rock" special and I'm wondering why the Loudmouths aren't in there. This two chick-one dude band kicks ass. They're a little faster and angrier (sounding) than the Donnas but you get the idea.

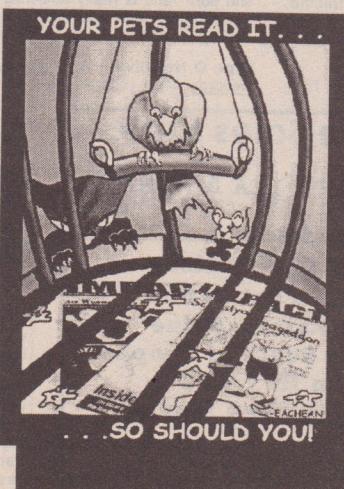
The Lures • When I was Broken • Ten 23 • The Lures are a pop-rock band from Athens, Georgia who play an incredibly diverse mix of power pop and soft, flowing sooths. There is a very large rift between the influences of the members which pushes them in myriad directions. Very emotional rock, and well worth it.

The Mercury Program • self-titled • Boxcar Records • I hate to call this stuff "soundtrack music", but I can't help thinking of some guy running across fire escapes in an obscure German film, being chased along by these songs. Eight tracks of spooky, meandering jazz-rock backed by a very tight rhythm section. This CD sits right there with John Coltrane in my moody section. Definitely see these guys the next time they come to town.

The Mopes • Accident Waiting To Happen • Lookout Records • What do you get when you mix some ex-Screeching Weasels? You get out your punk party hat because you are listening to The Mopes and you are going to like it a lot. This is punk with a definite Green Day/Queers/Beach Boys feel to it. It is rocking and rolling and one of the better pop punk discs that I have heard in many a month. Buy it.

The Panoply Academy Glee Club • What We Defend • Secretly Canadian • This is the second effort from the sonic artists of the PAGC. The music is a collage of sounds, invoking fragments of art punk, math rock, and noise rock, among other genres. The PAGC has opened shows for Joan of Arc, and at times sounds reminiscent of the headliners. This is certainly isn't for those who like concise, pop hooks in a verse-chorus structure, but the musically adventurous will find many pleasures in this album. *What We Defend* is an interesting release that gets better with repeated listens.

The Parka Kings • Where's The After Party? Live • Jump Up Records • If you enjoyed the Parka King's earlier albums, you'll want this. If you've never heard any of their recorded output, well, a live album is always a curious way to start. This ska outfit has called it quits, and this CD is their final show. The quality is spotty in sections with the horns suffering the most. I didn't get into it a whole lot, though the intention was to preserve



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QUICKIES

A little bit on a lot of records.

the moment rather than surpass "Frampton Comes Alive" in record sales.

The Peacocks • *In Without Knocking* • **Jump Up! Records** • Billed as "Switzerland's most notorious rockabilly/ska band", the Peacocks have garnered much attention opening for the likes of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, the Voodoo Glow Skulls, and the Toasters. Their songs are energetic, punk-influenced tunes with an underlying rockabilly beat and some ska thrown in as well. Think the Reverend Horton Heat with a dose of ska. This is some good stuff.

The Renovators • *Rhythm and Blueprints* • **Berger Platner** • This is a solid album for those with a weakness for the blues. The band is musically tight and the vocals are just rough enough to give it a smoky bar feel. While the country influence is noticeable it is not strong enough to detract from the album. Check it out.

The Softs • *1901* • **Silly Bird Records** • From Austin, Texas rises up The Softs, a five-piece with a slow growl and a big bite. The pace is slow to mid-tempo, painful, uneasy, and drooling along is a way that may frighten you while it sucks you in. 1901 is ten tracks of painful ecstasy.

The Statue Factor • *A Mission of Five* • **Nebulon Community Records** • Unfortunately, much of my potential appreciation of this release is marred by my prior knowledge of R&B/Soul influenced The Make-Up. The Statue Factor seem to be influenced by The Make-Up, minus the mastery of their instruments and the reckless passion towards R&B that makes The Make-Up so vital. The similarities in clothing, attitude, and mod-influenced sound are too much to ignore. However, if you are able to look past this, The Statue Factor have some pretty solid rock numbers on this disc, and an organ that is put to good use. Give it a listen, and judge for yourself.

The Swarm • *Parasitic Skies 10"* • **No Idea** • I feel like I'm being physically abused by my record player every time I listen to this. It's a ten-inch slate of gray vinyl that is as forboding in looks as the music sounds. The Swarm (aka Knee Deep in the Dead) are ferocious musicians, intent on putting out infectious hardcore/scremcore. The music has enough breaks and creative changes to separate it from the middle-of-the-road hardcore bands - leaving The Swarm standing in a class of its own.

The Union of a Man and a Woman • *The Sound Of...* • **Jaqiaguar** • An impressive aspect of "The Sound Of..." is that it was recorded live in the studio, with only vocals receiving the overdub treatment. The Union... will rock you with their brand of art-rock, and will make your ears bleed (in a good way) with their static-y, noise filled guitars. Some songs are sprinkled with silence, a technique that should confuse even the most seasoned headbanger. Oh, and by the way, these three musicians are still in High School.

The Unseen • *So This is Freedom?* • **A-F Records** • "What Are You Gonna Do" starts off this punk disc in the right way. The fast paced delivery make it an instant anthem. The Unseen play punk without the nihilism, which is a nice turn. Perhaps my favorite song is their hidden track 14, which is a cover of "Beat It." This CD is worth the price for that cover alone.

The Wunder Years • *Pitstops On The Road Less Traveled*

• **Tomato Head Records** • An ability to mix hooks, emotion, pop, rock, punk with an innocent charm are the reasons The Wunder Years' new album is a damn good album. The pace of the tracks swings from track to track and within tracks. The vocals are really astounding, allowing the music to go from sweet and sincere to intense and angry without leaving the lead singer behind. A solid debut, with as much heart as skill.

Three Finger Cowboy • *Hooray for Love* • **Daemon Records** • This is what you expect a band to sound like if they're considered a "local band." "Hooray for Love" is a pop album with minimal guitar distortion, but catchy tunes. They would fit perfectly in a coffee house or an open mike night at a local bar.

Thrill Show • *Highway 13* • **Get Hip Recordings** • "Highway 13" will satisfy your Rockabilly cravings with 17 new tracks by Thrill Show. It's been a while since this trio recorded, but they wanted to take their time writing material to follow up their successful debut "Been Up To The Devil's Business." The quality of "Highway 13" is a great improvement over "Been Up To...", since they actually used a recording studio instead of frontman Woody Bond's living room.

Tilt • *Viewers Like You* • **Fat Wreck** • Tilt should need no introduction, but I know they do. Damn you people... this is only one of the greatest bands and the greatest vocalist in the world of punk rock. Their latest offering has a great power and energy to it, and Cinder Block is singing more gymnastically than ever before. Tilt whales, and there just isn't any argument to be had.

Tom Daily • *Happily Deceiving Culture* • **Thick Records** • No longer the pop-punk guitarist of The Smoking Popes and Not Rebecca, Tom's solo debut has him on all the instruments, pumping out great, creative pop-rock. It all has a simple feel, but the music isn't simple. Sometimes it reminds me of Material Issue, but it's not that one-dimensional. It's personal, heart-felt and hook-filled.

Torn Skin • *Mislead* • **Blacklight Records** • This CD features the track "Mislead," plus seven remixes by Fatal Blast Whip, Pivot Clowj, 16 Volt, Culture Whore, Colossal Spin, Jan Carlelev and Fish Tank 9. Also on the disk are two additional tracks, "Addiction" and "Shame." These two, along with the title track, are pretty good industrial songs, infused with a touch of electronic sounds that any KMFDM fan will appreciate. All the remixes differ in sound and tempo, so you won't feel like you're listening to the same song seven times.

Total Chaos • *In God We Kill* • **Cleopatra Records** • You have not lived until you have seen the hair that these guys sport. They have the most beautiful punk heads that the world has ever seen. It is happily that I also note that the music is good too. 19 fast hard-hitting punk rock tunes that really kick ass. This is old school meets new school and the mix is just right. Get it.

Tricky Woo • *Sometimes I Cry* • **Sonic Union Records** • OK, this is my sleeper pick of the month. At first you might not like this band, I didn't, but give it a listen and I think you'll come around. It's parts psychedelic rock and punk, and is really addicting. I don't know what it is about this, even now as I listen to it again, but it's catchy, dammit! Really cool stuff.

Type O Negative • *World Coming Down* • **Roadrunner Records** • As soon as the thundering guitar and funeral organs kicked in during the open of "White Slavery," I knew that the latest album by Type O Negative was well worth the wait. "World Coming Down" is by far TON's best work to date. Get ready for down tempo songs with harmonic choruses. Peter Steele shows that indeed he has a vulnerable side in songs like "Everyone I love Is Dead," as well as the title track. More often do we hear the bottom end of his amazing vocal range (something that was underused in previous albums, in my opinion), giving the songs a particular darkness. In fact, there seems to be a certain kind of sadness that permeates

the entire recording. Gone are the sexual references and overtones of the past, giving way to a more mature and introspective themes, like death and chemical dependency. Any true TON fan will enjoy "World Coming Down," if anything because they are not afraid to change their direction without compromising their sound.

U.S. Bombs • *The World* • **Epitaph** • I have nothing but respect for U.S. Bombs. This punkest of bands is also the most musically capable. They refusal to recycle the history of punk in favor of channeling what they have to say into a rough and tumble rock and blues format and feel. Each song is it's own narrative, with Duane Peters essentially now in the role of the crazy punk uncle who spins wild yarns that would be dismissed if you couldn't shake the sense they were experienced first hand. So pick this up. It'll expand your musical definition of punk rock.

Unida • *Coping with the Urban Coyote* • **Man's Ruin Records** • John Garcia, former lead singer for Kyuss and Sloc Burn, has assembled a new crew that will rock you right off of your ass. If you're a Monster Magnet or Solarized fan, you definitely will like the balls-to-the-wall sounds of Unida.

Unruh • *Setting Fire to Sinking Ships* • **Pessimiser Records** • For the first 50 seconds or so, I thought this would be some instrumental guitar album. Boy, was I wrong! Soon after, the barrage of heavy guitar and machine-gun drumming that is the centerpiece of any death-metal album makes its presence known. They print the lyrics on the inside booklet, but they may as well have not bothered. I tried to follow along with the singer, but lost my place immediately. I'm sure you'll love it.

Various Artists • *Before You Were Punk 2* • **Vagrant Records** • This CD has a number of popular punk rock bands covering 80's tunes. Unfortunately I didn't know nor like some of the new wave bands covered, though the Top 40 stuff is tops! The Suicide Machines cover "What I Like About You." The Hippos run through "Our Lips are Sealed," and The Get Up Kids do a nice cover of the Cure's "Close To Me." Other bands include All, NOFX, Bouncing Souls, and others. Well worth it!

Various Artists • *Big Fish Music Sampler Autumn 1999* • **Big Fish Music** • Big Fish Music has put out yet another compilation of independent artists from Japan. Musical styles range from ska to punk, from industrial to trance, and from folk to alternative. The lyrics are sung in both English and Japanese, and most are really good. One track that stood out was "Oxygen Starvation Doggie-Woogie," by Steve Eto, a fast paced trance number featuring a sample of a heavy breathing person that gives the track a very hurried pace.

Various Artists • *Contents Under Pressure* • **Bomb Hip Hop Records** • If you're interested in what's going on in the underground of S.F. hip hop, get hold of this disc. I really enjoyed the selections here though I had never heard of any of the DJs. The only downside is the lack of DJ information or the compiler's take on hip hop and what these tracks might have to do with the hip hop culture's future. This CD is short on content, but long on good tracks.

Various Artists • *DA2000CD* • **Double Agent Records** • A compilation from Double Agent is always welcome. Full of various electronic tracks and some 80's new wave sounds that make a fantastic sample of the style of Double Agent. The first track from Unisex (They Do Feel Strange) is a quirky upbeat tune that is worth the price of admission.

Various Artists • *Jock Jams 5* • **Tommy Boy** • This compilation is made worthwhile by the inclusion of Madonna's "Ray of Light," "Feel It" by Tamperer, and "Suavemente" by Elvis Crespo. There's also a remix of "All I have to Give" by the Backstreet Boys, and about 14 more tracks that make for a good party CD.

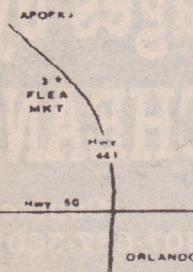
Various Artists • *The Spirit Lives on* • **Hate Core Records** • This is a tribute to Raybeez and Warzone, featuring 27 hardcore and Oi! bands. Though I'm not overly familiar with Raybeez, it's quite apparent his music and death have touched a significant number of bands and fans. This CD is more a showcase of human compassion than anything else. Sure, some of the bands have a take no prisoners approach, but their hearts are still with their heroes. A worthwhile investment, as you get the classics of Warzone interpreted by some of the soon to be important hardcore and Oi! bands.

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QUICKIES

A little bit on a lot of records.

Various Artists • Mailorder Is Still Fun!! • Asian Man/Tomato Head • This 28-track, 28-band CD has a suggested retail price of \$3.99. No lie! So buy it! It features such bands as Less Than Jake, Korea Girl, Slapstick, Tuesday, The Jamons, The Wunder Years, Mike Park and many other pop/punk/ska bands. You really can't go wrong with this.

Various Artists • Nowcore! • K-Tel • If everyone owned a recordable CD player, this compilation would mean nothing, because it's all previously released stuff. But, since I don't own one and not many others do, this is a really great collection of some of the newer sounds coming out, not just emo and not just punk rock – the bands that fit in-between. The bands featured on here include The Promise Ring ("Why Did We Ever Meet"), Seaweed ("Start With"), Braid ("New Nathan Detroit's"), At The Drive In ("For Now We Toast"), Burning Airlines ("Wheaton Calling") and eleven others (Unwound, Knapsack, Jawbox, etc...). K-Tel did a great job of selecting some of the better songs by each band.

Various Artists • City Rockers: A Tribute to the Clash • Chord Recordings • This is the second Clash tribute album to be released in recent months. The first was a decidedly mainstream affair, as radio darlings such as Third Eye Blind and No Doubt paid "tribute" with bland, boring versions of some of the Clash's finest tunes. The artists appearing on the City Rockers compilation do a far superior job of capturing the spirit of the original songs. Hot Water Music, Dropkick Murphys, and Skinnerbox are among the many bands who turn in great performances, helping to make this the true Clash tribute album.

Various Artists • Pedal Faster, Bicycle Rider • Holiday Matinee/Accident Prone • This is the first release for Holiday Matinee, a small, independent publicity company from San Diego. The compilation features a variety of artists, covering everything from emo to indie pop to spoken word. There's a little something for everybody. Standout tracks include Tristeza's instrumental "Beige Finger" and Tugboat Annie's "Contact".

Various Artists • Start Your Engines • Side One • This is a kick-ass mix of all the beerswillin', assgrabbin', shittkickin' cow punk that you could ever want. Imagine ZZ Top with mohawks. 28 furious songs, 28 super charged bands and not a lemon in the bunch. Includes Teen Idols, El Diablo, The Nobodys, Custom Made Scare and all sorts of other wonderful bands. Buy this, raise the stars and bars and rock out.

Various Artists • The Wasted Years • Ace of Hearts Records • Long-time producer and Ace of Hearts head honcho Rick Harte presents a collection of rare and unreleased tracks from the label's archives. Mission of Burma, the Del Fuegos, and the Lyres are among the Boston area acts who make appearances on this compilation that spans the 20-plus years of Ace of Hearts existence.

Wheat • Hope and Adams • Sugar Free Records • How can I describe this record?? There are elements of indie pop, with hints of Yo La Tengo, Sebadoh, and Smog. Maybe there's a little No Depression alt-country in the mix. There are no real standout tracks on the album, but the songs flow together in a seamless, almost perfect order. Everything has its place, resulting in a beautiful album that is greater than the sum of its individual songs.

Where Fear and Weapons Meet • The Weapon • Revelation Records • Their debut ep made a solid impression upon release near a year ago. This follow-up full-length from Miami's finest does not disappoint. They pound out hardcore better than the "old school" that influences them. Once you think hardcore is on its last leg, out comes a band that plays the music better than it used to be, with better sing-along parts and breakdowns and a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and energy. Might as well get this CD now – everyone will be clamoring for it tomorrow.

Will Haven • WHVN • Revelation Records • This is a far better record that 1997's El Diablo. Whereas that record was a sonic mess, WHVN shows Will Haven to be a more capable and powerful musical entity. The songs are heavy, the vocals still a throaty growl, and the experimental forays into sonic abstraction make me happy that Will Haven is willing to push the boundaries of hardcore. This is an addictive thrill, so scream along and bask in the glory of a record that hits the mark.

Wolfpac • Something Wicked This Way Comes • Chord

Records • You might remember a group called The Bloodhound Gang. Then again, you might not. Anyway, one of the group's founding members, Daddy Long Legs, left the group and formed Wolfpac. The result is angry rap-metal. The vocal style is not too original with the rest of the band chanting the last word of every verse on a lot of the songs. All in all, though, "Something Wicked This Way Comes" might be good enough for you, especially if you're an ICP fan. Check out their cover of Digital Underground's "The Humpty Dance."

Seven inches

American Steel • Every New Morning • Cheetah's Records • Look-out! Records will be releasing more material from this four-piece later in the year, and that's a good thing. American Steel are a super punk rock band with heartfelt, gruff vocals and melodies that are constantly changing. What else makes it cool: Cover of the Psychedelic Furs' "No Tears."

Anti-Domestix • This Demon Called Love • Cheetah's Records • Five guys, five songs and a Face to Face kinda sound. And they're damn good. Mix to uptempo melodic punk rock with plenty of tempo changes, solid vocals and thick melodies.

Dexter • self-titled • 702 Records • The record is labelled 33 1/3 RPM, but I'm reviewing it at 45 RPM, cause I think that's the correct speed. The music is rock and roll, straight up, no gimmicks. And it's great. The guitar work is jazzed up, wild and perfect while the vocals fit the mix perfectly. There's a 60's feel and a bluesy attitude that I just love.

Habituels/The Lexingtons • split release • No Idea Distro • The Habituels and The Lexingtons share two of the same members and both bands come from Gainesville. So it's fitting that they share space on this piece of vinyl. The Habituels play drunk, speedy punk rock with a real attitude. The Lexingtons have a snottier lead-singer and vindictive kinda sound. Four songs total, two by each band.

Luckie Strike • Have You Seen Me? • Tomato Head Records • Characterized by sincere female vocals, this punk quartet would have a really great four-song 7" if it weren't for the punk rock version of "Sloop John B," which really sucks. The next song is great melodic punk rock in the vein of Tilt or Discount. Side B features a pretty solid instrumental and a live punk/hardcore track that is also way-melodic and very cool. Bonus: It's on clear red vinyl.

Muler • self-titled • Carbon Records • Muler is a killer indie-rock band from New York. The vocals are sincere, heartfelt and right on time while the music dances around a sweet, poppy melody that has just enough noise and feedback to keep it from becoming candy-coated. This is the kind of band that can get the most out of place person to dance at the live show. Oh, it's on clear vinyl.

Panthro U.K. United 13 • Goleta • No Idea Records • Outta the mean streets of Gainesville, Florida comes this four-piece of furious, punk intensity. The music is thick with aggression and melody while the vocals are solid and support the songs throughout. They cover Naked Raygun's "Rat Patrol" and they do it damn well. Lookin' for another reason to get it: clear green vinyl.

Radio 4 • self-titled • Gem Blandsten • Radio 4 features three fellows, ex-members of Garden Variety, Sleepasaurus, Milhouse and Long Distance Runner. The music has a rock sound that bands like The Jam and The Clash made cool. It's rock and roll with a punk attitude. All three tracks have great vocals and music with a killer bounce and intricate melodies.

Redrum • self-titled • 702 Records • Do you remember DRI? Not DRI that was metal, but the DRI that all the kids skated to back in the mid-80's. Redrum has captured that same intensity and sped without forgoing a sense of melody. This is straight-ahead, punch you in the face punk rock – 8 songs worth.

The Basics • self-titled • Lookout! Records • Outta south Florida comes this four-piece delivering four tracks of melodic, uptempo punk rock. All of the songs rock hard, have a true punk rock feel and a genuine attitude throughout. It reminds me of a cross between old Social Distortion and The Bolweevils.

The Pottyshots • No Longer Building • Beeshu Records • These three Milwaukee cats put forth four tracks of instrumental rock, featuring tight, searing guitar work, a non-stop beat and basslines to pull you along. I'm not a big fan of instrumental music, but I'll make an exception for this slab.

Young Punch • Helmet On • Tomato Head Records • Japan is still really into punk-ska bands and this Japanese band is a testament to it. They play hook-filled, uptempo punk with ska riffs and horns here and there. It's a solid, four-song release.

Label Addresses

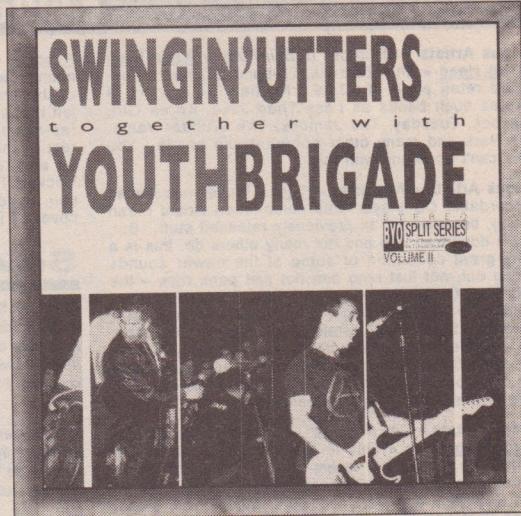
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Alias Records, 10153 1/2 Riverside Dr., Ste. 115, Toluca Lake, CA 91602
American Pop Project, PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912
Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585
Battle Axe, 161 C St #219, PO Box 3969, Blaine, WA 98231-3969
Beeshu Records, 1421 N. 69th St., Milwaukee, WI 53213
Bifocal Media, PO Box 296, Greenville, NC 27835-0296
Big Fish Music, 1-5-12-102 Hiroo Shibuya, Tokyo, 150-0012, Japan
Blacklight Records PO Box 6552 Kokomo, IN 46904
Bomb Hip-Hop, 4104 24th Street-PMB #105 San Francisco, CA 94114
Bong Load Records, PO Box 39557, LA, CA 90039-0557
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Chord Recordings, PO Box 15793, Philadelphia PA 19147
Cleopatra, 13428 Maxella Ave #251 Marina Del Rey, CA 90292
Compulsive Records, PO Box 15440, San Antonio, TX 78212-9998
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Gem Blandsten, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661
Get Hip Recordings, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
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Green Room Recs, 126 N. Almont Dr., Ste. 3, Beverly Hills, CA 90211
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The U.S. is selling out Taiwan

by Auren Hoffman

Remember 1938?

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Remember 1938?

Last month Taiwan President Lee told the world what everyone has known for the last 20 years - Taiwan is a state and should have state to state negotiations with China. Lee said the obvious - Taiwan is not some breakaway province of China but a thriving democracy with one of the strongest economies in Asia.

After those remarks, China made the predicted threats of taking over Taiwan. You'd think the U.S. would support Taiwan - who has been a strong trading partner, a strong ally, and a strong democracy. Instead, the Clinton Administration has actually blamed Taiwan (and specifically President Lee) for antagonizing China.

This sounds like appeasement and 1938 to me.

In the latest edition of Forbes, former Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger penned a thought-provoking piece on the current Taiwan fiasco. He points out that over the last few years, the official U.S. policy toward China has been one of appeasement. He points out that this is extremely dangerous and makes the very pointed analogy to the Munich Pact with Hitler and Mussolini in 1938 when Britain and France sold out Czechoslovakia.

Weinberger contends that Clinton is today's Neville Chamberlain - who instigated World War II because of his unwillingness to act and stand up for the free world early.

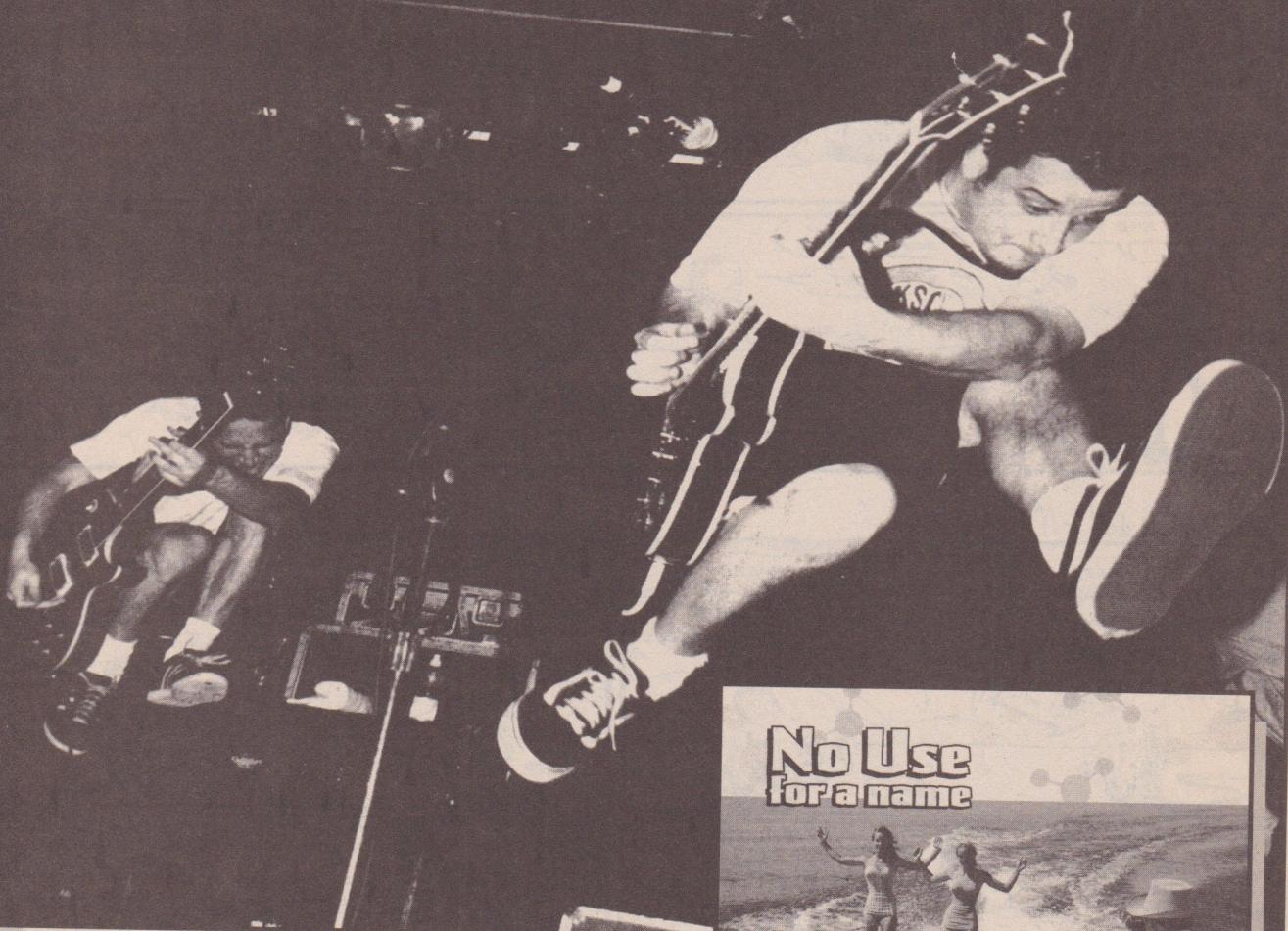
For the last five years we have had a policy of appeasing China where did this get us? We got massive human rights abuses, threats on friendly neighbors, trade embargoes of our goods, massive espionage within our own borders, and attempts to tamper with our elections. This is not a country that we want to appease.

For once the U.S. should act with moral discipline and support what's right - even at the cost of making China angry. We should give our full, 100% support to the Taiwanese people and guarantee their security. If we can protect the Kosovars or the Kuwaitis, we can help protect Taiwan (who happens to be a huge trading partner of the U.S.).

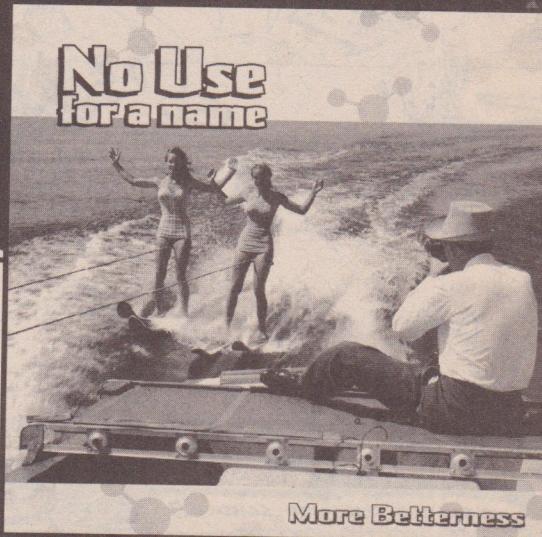
SUMMATION: Don't repeat 1938. Don't sell out Taiwan.



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The Muddle March

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IMPACT press #23 - October/November '99

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Q: "First, I want to thank you guys at IMPACT for doing this type of article. For someone like me, it's the only place to turn. I have been injecting drugs for a while and I don't need a lecture on just saying no to drugs. But I hope that you will be able to tell me some ways to clean my needle and syringes when I share them. I don't have access to bleach all the time. Please if there are any other ways to clean them please let me know."

"A Chemical Brother"

A: No lecture here, just the facts. The

best thing to do is to not share needles and syringes. You can never sterilize them, you can just clean them. The best way to clean them is 3x water, 3x with bleach, 3x water. Take the syringe and aspirate/suck in the water until it fills up the syringe. Hold it for thirty seconds and then tap on it. After 30 seconds, expel the water out onto the ground or into a sink. Never put the used water back into the container of water. Do that two more times with the water for a total of three times. Then three times with the bleach, followed by three more times with water.

If you do not have bleach available another option is, start off with very hot water, as hot as you can get it. Suck the hot water into the syringe and hold it there for 30 seconds and tap on the syringe. After the 30 seconds, expel the water out into the sink or onto the ground. Do this about five times with very hot water, as

By
Jeffrey-
John
Nunziata

hot as you got. Then do it five times with cold water. Remember 5x hot water, 5x cold water. Hold for 30 seconds each time and tap.

You can even boil the syringe in boiling hot water for at least ten minutes. But the syringe has to be in the boiling water for at least 10 minutes. This method although effective takes a long time.

I hope that at least one of these three methods works for you. When you can, try not to share your needles. Try not to divide hits with syringes either. Whenever you come into contact with someone else's blood an infection can pass from one person to another.

If you want to mail letters to an address....

Jeffrey-John Nunziata

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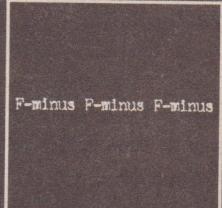


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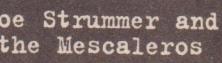
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Tiger Army



Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros



Rick Art and the X-Ray Style



By Chip McConnell

700 BC - A great earthquake rocks China measuring 8.3 on the Richter Scale by today's standards. After this, all Chinese houses are made from light bamboo and paper rather than glass and sharp pointy metal things.

50 AD - Christianity is formed in the garage of one of the original Apostles. A base player is still needed.

1057 AD - England goes to war with Scotland. They were supposed to go to war with Ireland but it had a hang-over.

1543 AD - Ireland sobers up and goes to war with England.

1804 AD - Lewis and Clark discover Canada. They advise the US government against purchasing it from the French because it's full of French people.

1903 AD - The Wright brothers make their inaugural flight at Kittyhawk. Wilbur's luggage ends up in Tucson.

1958 AD - The US can no longer wait for Ireland to wake up from its drunken binge after its war with England in 1543, so it picks a war with VietNam.

1977 AD - Disco dies and Punk Rock is born. Yipee.

One Year Ago Today - I ate the Outback Steakhouse. I had the salmon and fries and a Bloomin' Onion. It was good.

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Harbor House

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Silent Witness Display featuring silhouettes for each person killed by domestic violence in Central Florida. Held @ Lake Eola

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There will be a March Away from Domestic Violence from the Band Shell @ Lake Eola to the Candlelight Vigil held from 7pm to 9pm. The Candlelight Vigil includes survivors telling their stories, live music, poems and skits. Vigil rain site: First Unitarian Church, 1901 East Robinson St.

all events are free to the public

for more info please contact margaret anglin at 407.886.2244 or wende/julie at 407.246.7007

october is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

IMPACT press #23 - October/November '99

Drugs, Prisons and Junior Bush

(DRUGS, continues from page 9)

were the times when Republican President Reagan waged his war on drugs. His wife said, "Just say no."

The eighties were also the time when Republicans gave the rich tax breaks.

It should be no surprise that crack, a poor man's drug, can get a person a longer prison sentence than powder cocaine, a rich man's drug.

Right along with tax breaks, Republicans were giving the rich prison breaks.

Bush, Jr also has said that prison confinement was all the treatment drug offenders needed. He said this despite the fact that untreated drug offenders will more than likely be rearrested.

It is also been proven that when treated for their drug habits, drug offenders will less likely return back to prison.

There has been speculation about the coincidental timing of Bush's treatment slashing and the new Texas private prison boom.

If there's one thing that has ticked me off about Republicans is the very fact that they just adore slashing programs that benefit the poor.

Like I mentioned before, rich folks don't get stiffer penalties like poor folks. Also, rich folks like Junior can afford to go to seek treatment.

I would rather people getting help to better themselves at taxpayers' expense than to lock them up for longer periods of times at taxpayers' expense. More than likely, with no kind of treatment, drug offenders are going to be pulling the same stunts that landed them in prison the first time. They could hurt some folks like some did the first time.

Investing money in treatment helps taxpayers' in the long run. If taxpayers' invest more money to help keep folks out of jail, the less money will be spent in the future.

More than likely, Republicans will use taxpayers' money to keep the prison business booming.

So, seeing how your son behaves towards the less unfortunate is why his past with drugs is relevant, Mr. Bush. Any kind of proof will show what a hypocrite he is.

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Creating passion and convincing the many: An Activist's Quest

EVERYONE HAS A CAUSE.
Even those who seem absolutely content with the state of the world have at least one thing that gets them riled up.

"Abortion?"

"Don't care."

"Death penalty?"

"Don't care."

"Animal rights?"

"Whatever."

"Political prisoners?"

"Not my problem."

"The homeless?"

"Not from the city, can't see it, don't care."

"Sunflower seeds?"

"Sunflower seeds?? Do you know that every year more sunflower seeds are spat onto the ground than are actually consumed? My god, I've written to my congressman at least twelve times about this, but does he do anything about it? Hell no! I don't see how people just go on about their lives when this is happening all over."

It is the challenge of the activist/rabble rouser to break through indifference and create a passionate interest in his cause. The problem is, the things that we believe are worth fighting for don't always match up. For example, the following exchange between a man on death row, a gay man, a dead man, a homeless person, and a home:

Gay man: I find it a grave insult gays are not allowed to marry in most parts of the country.

Dead man: Yeah, well at least you're alive. You think dead people can get married anywhere?

Home: I am a home. I have no sexual desires.

Homeless man: I wish I was dead.

Man on death row: All this talk about being homeless and gay rights! My life is on the line here!

Dead man: Oh, stop your complaining. Christ, I was killed, too. You don't see me whining about it. My skin is rotting off my bones, here.



by adam finley
art by eachean

Gay man: The homosexual counter-culture has been...

Homeless: Shut up! At least you don't have to dig through a dumpster for a stale donut, or have people ignore you as they pass by on the street. Somedays I think I should just end it a —

Man on death row: Don't say it.

Home: Would it kill somebody to vacuum my stairs?

Homeless man: You high cost bastard! It's because of your location

in the 'trendy' part of town that I can't afford to live in you.

Home: Like that's my fault? Maybe you'd like me to be a crack house?

Homeless man: I resent that.

Home: And no one wants to clean my stairs? Someone could fall down and get killed.

Man on death row: Someone is about to get killed here!

Gay man: Yeah, during a hate crime.

Dead man: None of you have any right to complain. Dammit, I got so angry my other eye fell out. I hope you're all happy.

While I was in college, an organization known as GALA (Gay And Lesbian Alliance) would hold meetings with little fanfare or advertisement to the rest of the campus. The group, which was quite small, consisted of mostly gays and lesbians. The group claimed they wanted to create awareness and understanding of the gay culture which existed on campus.

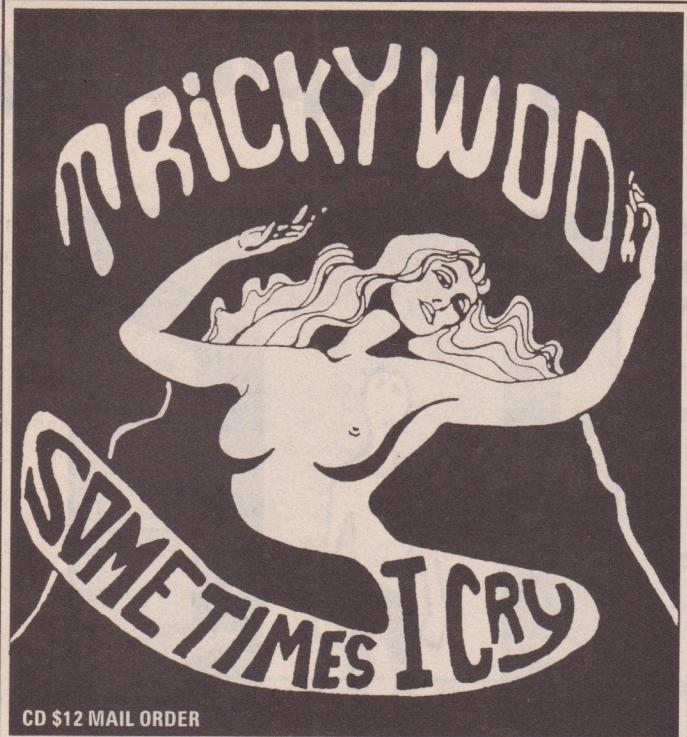
How they accomplished this by just holding meetings among themselves is beyond me.

"I call this meeting to order. Are we all gay?"

"Yes."

"Ok, meeting adjourned."

The real activist tries to penetrate the ignorance and indifference of the rest of the world. Otherwise, you're just talking to yourself, and wondering why no one will vacuum your stairs.



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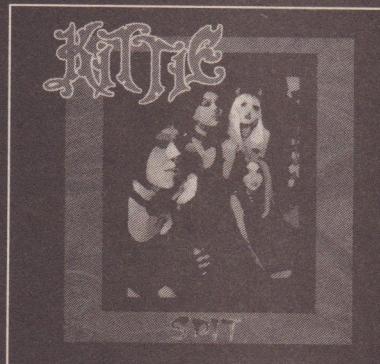
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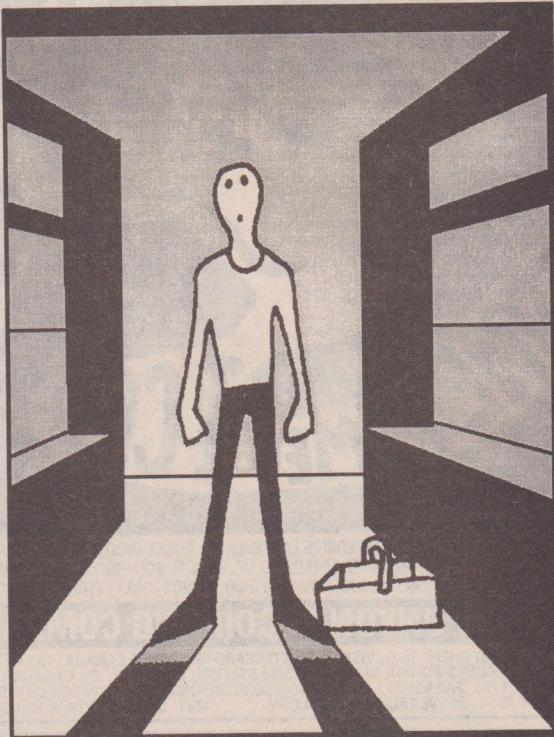
Warning! Warning! Stupid Rays

IN ANCIENT TIMES (meaning the 1950's), people had two options for gathering food. One was to hunt for it, the other, to farm for it. The first called for a stealthy gait and a healthy respect for your prey, the other an affinity for nature and a dedication to life. Luckily, we don't need any of those things to get food today. Just a check book or debit card and a tolerance for stupid people.

I'm sorry. Did I say "stupid people"? Why yes, I did. Now I hear you saying, "So what you're trying to tell us, Chip, is that everyone who goes grocery shopping is stupid?" Well, not everyone. I'm not. Don't get me wrong, it's not the people. It's the shopping carts. They must attract some sort of stupid rays. Case in point; I ran into the grocery store to grab some items. I've been in this store before, so I know exactly where the medium hot salsa and nacho chips are (cleverly placed in two isles separated by the same amount of distance that's between Antarctica and the Arctic, by an insidious co-conspirator of the grocery cart people, but that's another story).

Having captured the salsa, I move swiftly down the chip aisle to find my way is blocked. A woman, a singular shopper, her shopping cart is turned sideways in the aisle and she is staring straight up in the air. She is totally oblivious to me and the two other people that are coming down the aisle from the opposite direction. She appears to be in a trance that could only be caused by stupid rays charging into her brain through the handle of the shopping cart she clutches. And, of course, she's standing right in front of the nacho chips.

"Excuse me," I say at least twice as I try to move to get the chips. For a brief moment, her hand leaves the



by Chip McConnell / art by eachean

cart and I see sanity return to her glazed eyes. "Oh, I'm sorry," she mutters. Stupid rays.

You can see the devastating and incapacitating effects of these rays in every aisle. In one aisle, a man is blankly gazing at mustard while a child of no more than three years leans precipitously over the front of the cart spitting Animal Crackers onto the floor. In another aisle, a woman slams her cart into the Achilles' tendon of another woman whose cart blocks the aisle. She winces slightly, but maintains her hold on two identical jars of strawberry jelly, staring at them as if they contained live eels.

I can do nothing but shake my head in pity. Then, I am met with the most gruesome sight! As I round the corner into the main aisle, I see not one, but two people so saturated with stupid rays that they are letting their children push the carts!

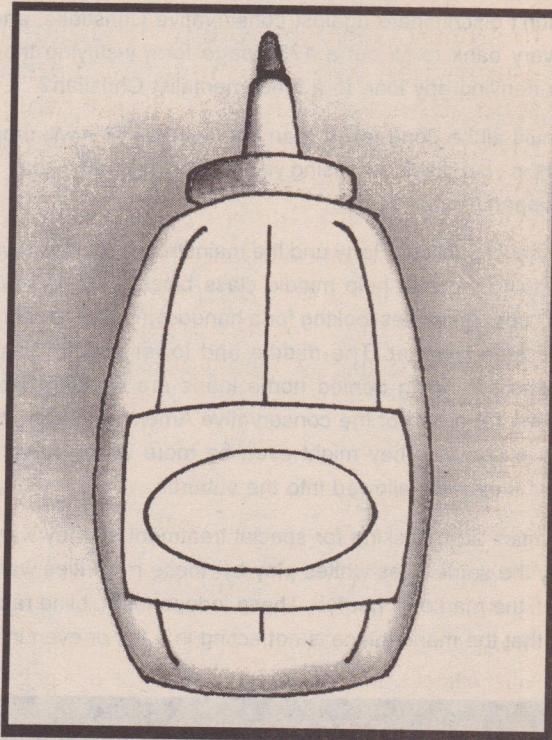
Where the stupid rays come from and who is behind them is still a mystery. I suspect, however, they are the same people that have a "logical" explanation why gasoline prices increase twenty cents overnight and how "The Nanny" managed to stay in prime time TV for so long.

I am reminded of a question (which has nothing to do with shopping) asked by a Cincinnati prosecutor when cross examining the psychiatrists of a murderer and known white supremacist. He asked the psychiatrist why the murderer waited until after April 20 to perform the crime.

"It was Hitler's birthday. He wanted to wait until after he celebrated Hitler's birthday," the psychiatrist replied.

"Adolph Hitler?" the prosecutor asked.

Some people never let go of the cart.



Racism on the rise, minorities denied

(RACISM, continued from page 10)

mand and end to this discrimination, 2. Force every bank to prove that they didn't discriminate against conservative Christians, and 3. Force every bank to fill out a 1732 page form justifying their reasons for denying any loan to a fundamentalist Christian?

And this would all be done faster than you can say "We will drop 10,000 flyers in your district accusing you of anti-Christian bigotry if you don't support this bill TODAY."

Why aren't the Republican Party and the mainstream conservative movement doing more to help middle class blacks buy homes? These aren't poor minorities looking for a handout in order to score a hit on the street corner. The middle and lower middle class minorities who are being denied home loans are working hard and are asking for a part of the conservative American dream, to own their own homes. They might even be more willing to vote Republican if they were allowed into the suburbs.

These minorities aren't asking for special treatment, all they want is to play by the same rules whites play by; these minorities want fairness. Yet, the market is not fair. These independent, blind race tests prove that the marketplace is not acting in a fair or even in a

"rational" or "free" manner.

Where are all the believers of the free market when you need them? Why do conservatives who love government help to create a fair marketplace with respect to securities regulation or zoning laws that keep porn shops out of their neighborhoods, suddenly turn silent on the need to use government laws to create a fair marketplace for home mortgage loans?

I don't want to believe that all conservative Republicans who oppose fair lending laws and spending more money to enforce the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity law are hypocritical bigots who simply hate black people and other minorities. But for the life of me, I can't find any other reason.

Access to mortgage loans, as a test of racism is easy because you are dealing with quantifiable qualifications: income, credit history, work history. But the obvious conclusion by any fair minded person is that racism must be flourishing in a society where most decisions on hiring, firing, and "who gets a lucky break" are not decided by any objective criteria.

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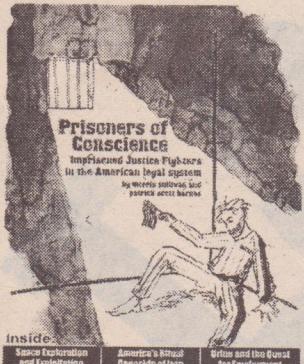
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issue #22

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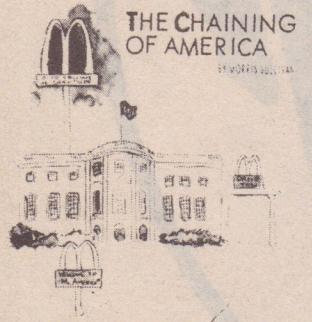
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Issue #5, Oct/Nov '96, Cover Story: Election '96 Special -- Also: Corporate Terrorists; Chiapas Mexico Injustice; Film is About Soul

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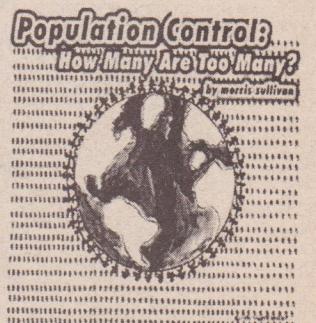
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issue #21

Inside:
Manifest Destiny
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issue #19

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